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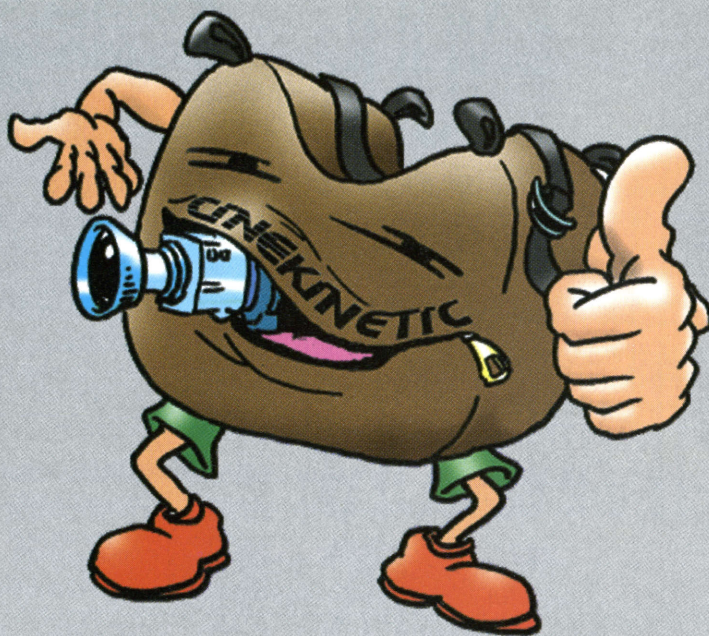
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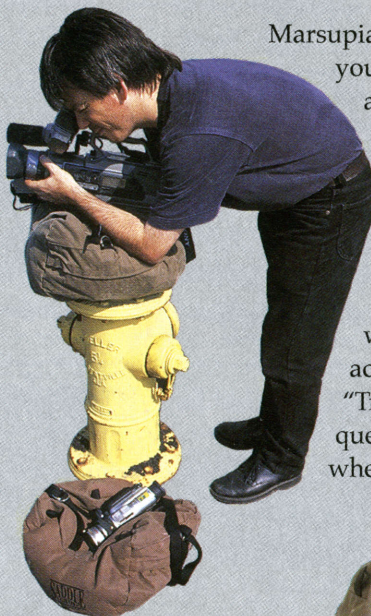


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American Cinematographer

The International Journal of Film & Digital Production Techniques

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On Our Cover: After surviving a plane crash in the Pacific Ocean, Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks) finds himself stranded on a remote island with little hope of escape in *Cast Away*, directed by Robert Zemeckis and photographed by Don Burgess, ASC (photo by Zade Rosenthal, courtesy of 20th Century Fox and DreamWorks).

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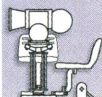
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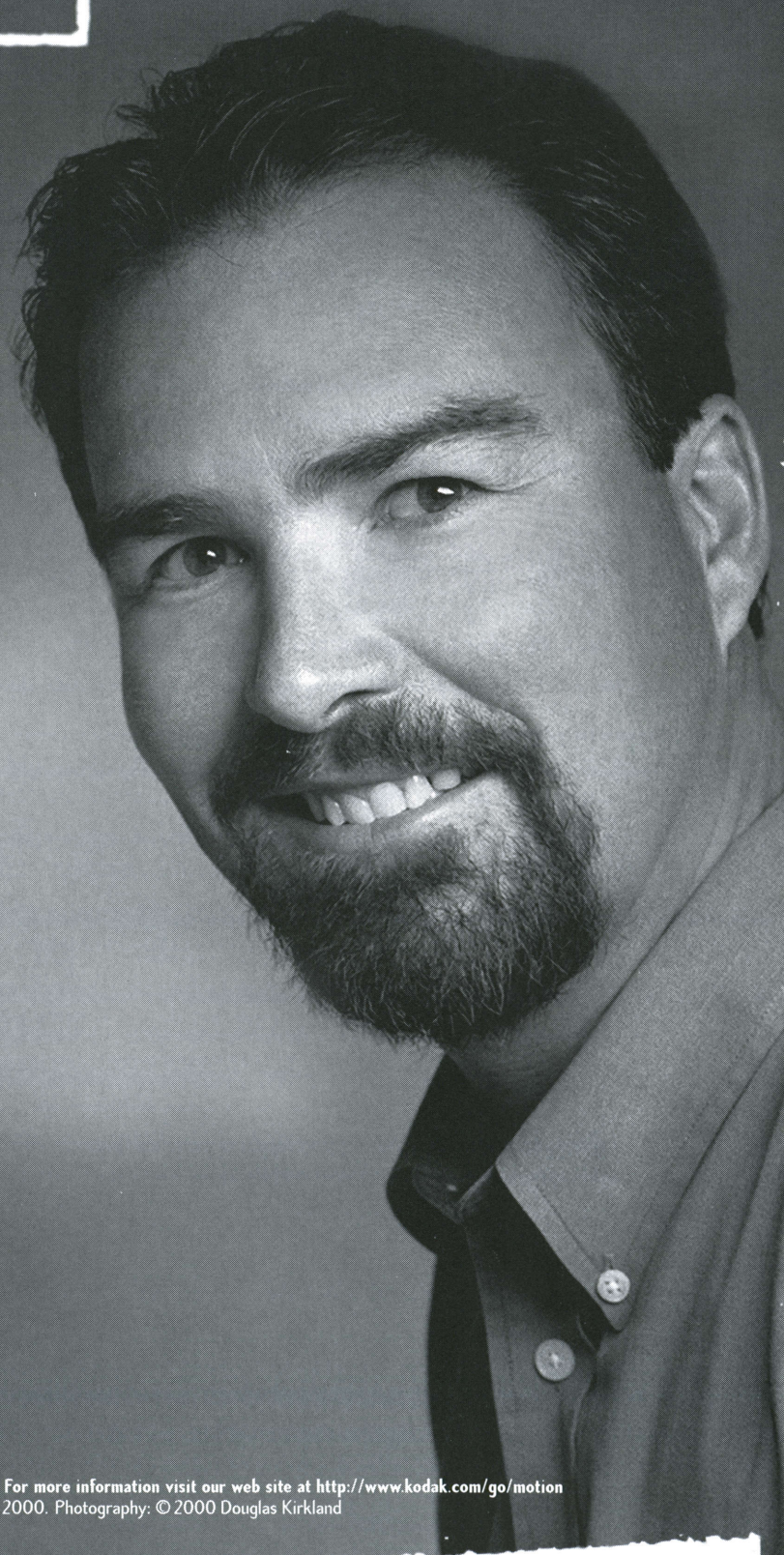
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ON FILM

BILL ROE



"The smallest change can alter the rhythm of a scene and meaning of a story. You have to pick your moments. Sometimes, it's moving the camera a few inches. Other times, it's a shadow in the darkness that can be more powerful than a close-up of a face. That's what makes it magic. I push myself to take chances every day, but I still finish each episode thinking I should have been bolder. I'm always asking myself questions and in the back of my mind it's like someone is whispering: 'Don't be afraid to make it darker.' That comes from deep inside. Who knows what will happen in 20 years, but film is the best way to shoot today because it has more colors, more latitude and more textures. I can't understand why anyone would settle for anything less."

Bill Roe earned two consecutive ASC Outstanding Achievement Awards for *The X-Files*. Other credits include the telefilms *Where the Truth Lies*, *Second Honeymoon* and *Detention: Siege at Johnson High*, and the TV series *Brooklyn South*.

All of these programs were shot on Kodak motion picture film.

For an extended interview with Bill Roe please visit the Kodak website: www.kodak.com/go/onfilm

Bill Roe



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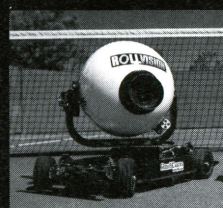
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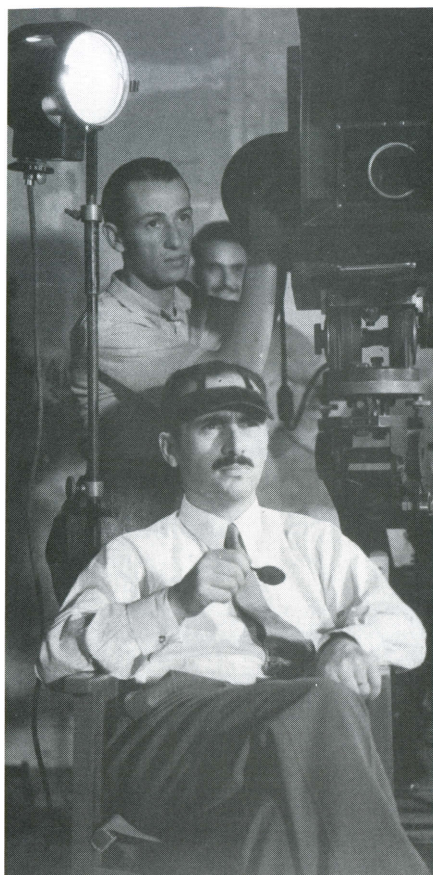
Steve Gainer

A movie poster for the film 'Unbreakable'. The background is dark with a blueish tint. At the top, a close-up of Bruce Willis's face is shown in profile, looking down. At the bottom, a close-up of Morgan Freeman's face is shown, looking up. In the center, a small silhouette of a person in a cape stands on a ledge. A jagged, cracked line, resembling shattered glass, runs diagonally across the middle of the poster, passing behind the title. The title 'UNBREAKABLE' is written in a large, white, serif font, centered horizontally and partially obscured by the cracked line.

UNBREAKABLE

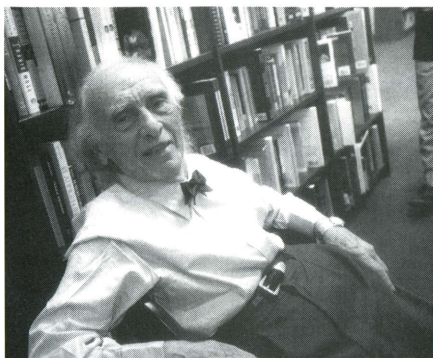
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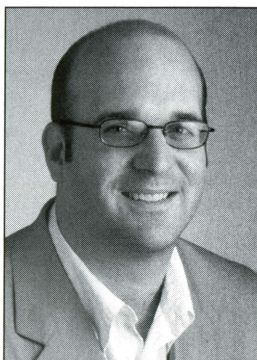


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Editor's Note



This issue of *AC*, which presents our annual roundup of films that seem likely to compete for Academy Awards, always involves a good deal of guesswork. With so many quality pictures flooding theaters to meet the year-end Oscar deadline, it's always tough to choose just a few, but all of the projects we've selected boast an abundance of cinematic panache.

Cast Away, the fourth reteaming of director Robert Zemeckis and cinematographer Don Burgess, ASC ("Sole Survivor," page 38), clearly demonstrates the advantages of a continuing collaboration.

Shooting mainly on location in Fiji, the filmmakers had to deal with the whims of Mother Nature and the unenviable task of shooting on the ocean. By exploiting their own system of creative shorthand, however, Zemeckis and Burgess were able to overcome the elements' fickle mischief.

Director Ang Lee and cinematographer Peter Pau, HKSC faced some equally tricky logistics on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* ("High-Flying Adventure," page 54). In order to bring this thrilling martial-arts epic to life, the filmmakers strove to combine live-action photography, elaborate wire-work stunts and digital effects into a seamless, poetic spectacle. The result is a visually arresting saga that manages to be not only entertaining, but emotionally engaging.

Philip Kaufman's *Quills*, shot by Rogier Stoffers ("Poison Pen," page 78), also benefits from a rich and thought-provoking subtext. In dramatizing the incarceration of literature's most infamous *enfant terrible*, the Marquis de Sade, the filmmakers take a firm stance on two closely related issues that are particularly relevant in today's political climate: freedom of speech and its ugly cousin, censorship.

While *Quills* recreates the ambience of 19th-century France, Billy Bob Thornton's *All the Pretty Horses* ("The Way of the West," page 88) captures the essence of a cowboy's life in evocative and iconic images captured by cinematographer Barry Markowitz.

This issue also features several articles that underscore the importance of film preservation and restoration. In "Saving Film History" (page 102), experts assess the damage and what can be done, while "Man With a Camera" (page 110) illustrates the value of archival material — in this case, home movies shot by legendary actor Lon Chaney.

Sincerely,

Stephen Pizzello
Executive Editor

e-mail: stephen@theasc.com

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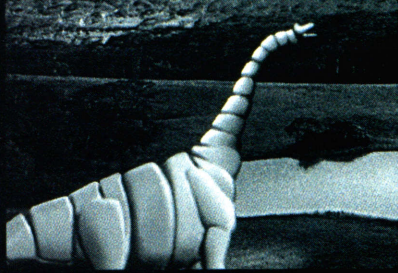
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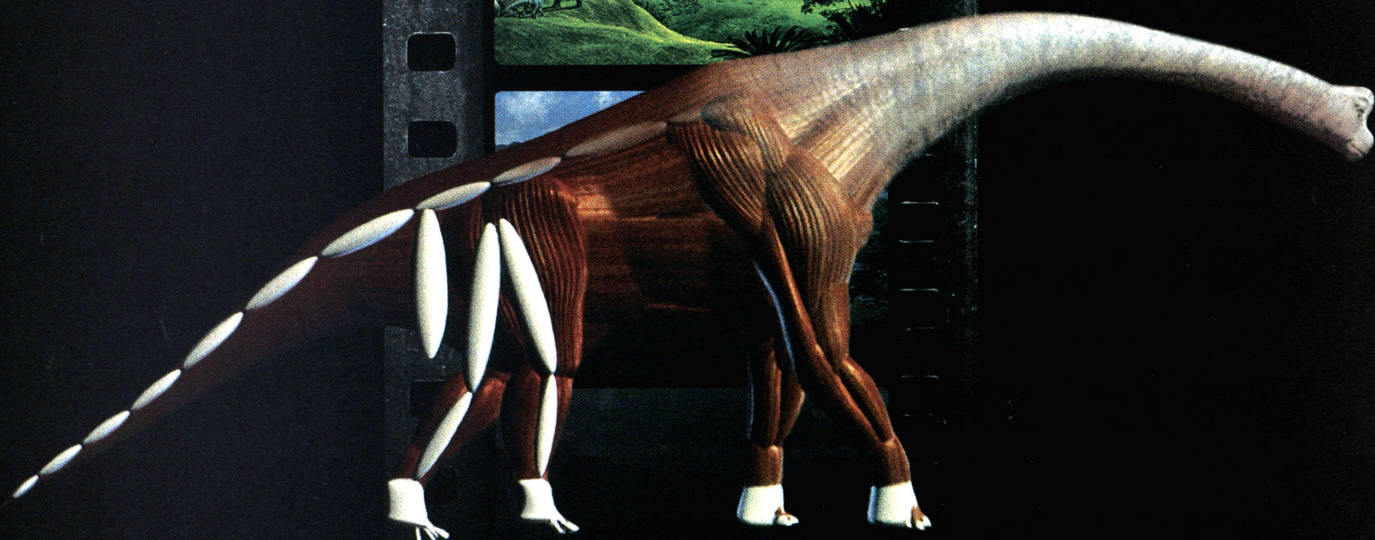
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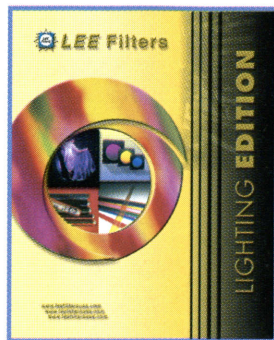
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The Post Process

SMPTE Examines Digital Cinema and Advanced TV

by Debra Kaufman

The Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE) convened its 142nd Technical Conference and Exhibition in late October, and whereas past conferences have been the focus of arcane technological discussions that only an engineer could love, this year's event had much to offer the broader motion-picture and television community. With the theme of "content acquisition, processing and distribution in the digital millennium," the topics of intense scrutiny included broadband distribution for broadcast and cable; digital cinema; Webcasting and interactive TV; content storage and management; film format and acquisition technologies; format transitions and conversions; visual effects and animation; audio production and post in a multichannel environment; metadata applications and options for production and transmission; and 24P production and postproduction.

Collectively, these presentations revealed the progress of digital TV and digital cinema. With regard to interactive TV, SMPTE engineers dissected the many problems that must be overcome before interactivity can become a widespread, standardized phenomenon. The necessity of developing rock-solid means of encapsulating Internet Protocol data into an MPEG data stream was examined, along with the particulars of a trial that's currently underway involving manufacturer Thomcast and PBS station WGBY in Springfield, Massachusetts. Triveni Digital's Gomer Thomas pointed out that although most people think "high definition" and "expensive" when they hear the term "digital television," data-enhanced programming can in fact play a significant role in assuring the

acceptance of DTV. A group of researchers at Germany's Computer Graphics Center (ZGDV) reported on the need for a new architecture to combine broadcast and Internet data, allowing the creation and use of hyperlinked interactive video.

Discussing what's new and improved among film-format and acquisition technologies, a group of engineers from the Netherlands' Philips Digital Video Systems described the architecture of a multi-format HDTV camera head based on a newly designed Frame Transfer CCD imager. Described as "a novel way" of capturing native 1080P, 1080I, and 720P at 16:9 aspect ratio and CineScope aspect ratio in 1080P, the HDTV camera head — which led to the development of the Philips LDK6000 multi-format camera — utilizes three Frame Transfer $\frac{2}{3}$ " CCDs with 9.2 M-pixels each, including overscan. Under software control, the pixels are pre-arranged, at the CCD, into image cells. The image diagonal (11 mm) is independent of spatial resolution and thus the same for all scanning formats. Cinematographers will be interested to learn that the HDTV multi-format head enables the user to vary camera gain from e.a. -6 dB (-1 f-stop) to e.a. 18 dB (+3 f-stop), a range that allows considerably more artistic freedom.

Eastman Kodak's David Long described the color technology behind the Kodak Ektachrome 100D Color Reversal Film (5285), introduced in 1999, which permits high color saturation while remaining true to flesh tones and scene neutrals. By controlling unwanted dye formation through chemical interlayer interimage effects, Kodak Ektachrome

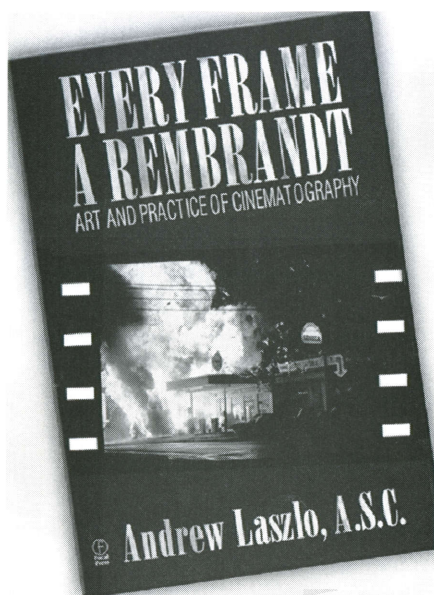
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100D film is able to reproduce the widest color palette of any 100-speed reversal film on the market — a palette, says Long, that “exceeds the practical limits of the motion-picture negative system.”

Long noted that a positive 100D film image can also be incorporated into feature productions via the use of a digital intermediate path where the images are scanned, interpolated and recorded as a negative set of densities on color intermediate film. The integrity of the original captured positive can thus be maintained through the system and then output to a distribution film.

David Bancroft of Philips Broadcast Film Imaging in the U.K. debated issues raised by what he calls “the merging of applications and technologies of two previously separate industries — motion pictures and television.” In particular, he examined how moving images should be represented electronically, and whether TV standards such as HDTV should be used for cinematographic standards or, conversely, whether TV post facilities would benefit from the adoption of data formats originally adopted to represent film frames. In describing the “cross-fertilization” of these two industries, Bancroft noted that TV and film worlds are still at loggerheads over the best way to represent images electronically.

Bancroft observed that “for the professional side of the industry... image data is already a more universal currency because of its flexibility in accommodating format and parameter variations. The question of whether [image data] can overcome its present cost, speed and usability disadvantages to become a more cost-effective medium than video will probably be answered in the next one to two years.”

Digital cinema was the focus of several SMPTE presentations — most significantly, the report of the SMPTE Study Group on Digital Cinema, otherwise known as DC 28. DC 28 has actively solicited the input of numerous industry organizations and guilds, including the ASC, the ICG, AMPAS and the DGA. DC 28 is broken up into subgroups that mirror the digital cinema process, beginning

with mastering and continuing through compression, conditional access and encryption, theater systems, transport and delivery, audio and projection.

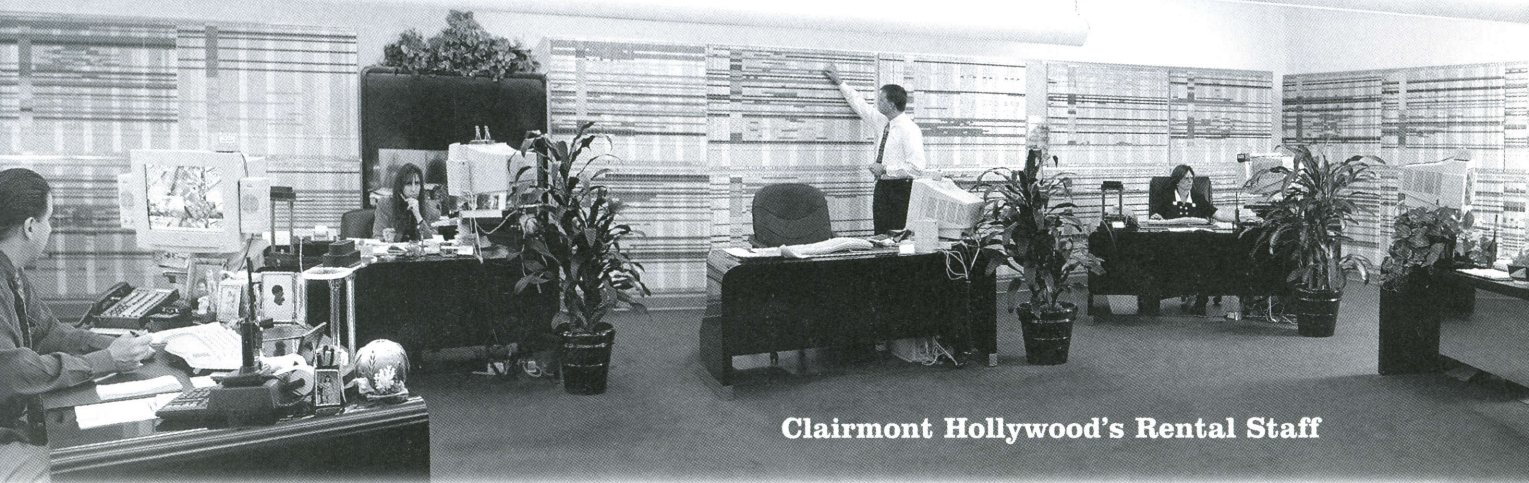
Moderator Curt Behlmer noted that DC 28, which is mandated to create technology standards for digital cinema, is “getting close to recommendations” as well as testing, which will take place at Hollywood’s Pacific Theater under the aegis of USC’s Entertainment Technology Center. DC 28’s intent is lofty: that digital cinema should “meet or exceed the quality of an answer print” and offer the equivalent or better to projected film, with the functionality of film and better tools for creators. Compression presents a challenge because it must be “lossless, forward-backward compatible, economic, open standard and high efficiency” in order to achieve the stated goal.

The need for a robust content-protection system is a troublesome weak spot, however. If such a system is not carefully planned and executed, digital cinema could be vulnerable to pirates and hackers. The DC 28 Study Group reported that studios, exhibitors and security experts have given input about their needs and concerns. Transport and delivery presented the options of a hard media, such as DVDs or hard drives, as well as transmission schemes such as a satellite system or a terrestrial fiber-based model.

The group focusing on projection described both systems and image requirements. Though the ideal image resolution was set at 4K, the DC 28 report noted that initially, image resolution would probably start off at 2K x 1K. Colorimetry was also identified as a crucial area for projection, with the necessity to map to the colorimetry used for mastering to ensure no visible degradation, especially if scaling is used.

Though the careful, reasoned work of the engineers inspires confidence in the resolution of technical issues, the meeting ended with a reminder that digital cinema has more than technical hurdles to overcome. “Who’s going to pay for this?” asked one member of the audience. Behlmer replied, “It’s not our problem.” ■

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Mike Figgis challenges our most basic conventions of narrative in *Timecode*, the movie that follows four simultaneous storylines in four unbroken 93-minute takes. The production demonstrates the quality (not to mention the recording time) of Sony DVCAM acquisition. Says Figgis, "There's no way we could have done this with traditional techniques."

Warm Blooded Killers is a dark comedy shot on Digital Betacam® tape and printed to 35mm. "I truly believe digital is the future," says Chuck Barbee, the director of photography. "The whole process was surprisingly good. And compared to film, raw tape stock costs next to nothing. This really lowers the cost of getting it in the can, which means that more projects can get made."

"*Star Wars: Episode II* is our last giant step toward Digital Cinema," says George Lucas, describing his decision to shoot principal photography with Panavision-modified Sony HDCAM® 24P

camcorders. "The familiar look and feel of motion picture film are present in this digital 24P system. And the picture quality between the two is indistinguishable on the large screen."

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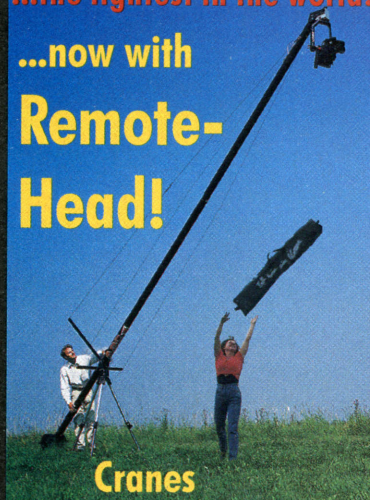
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DVD Playback

by **Chris Pizzello** and **Ray Zone**

Treasures from American Film Archives:

50 Preserved Films

Program notes

by Scott Simmon

Notes on the music

by Martin Marks

National Film Preservation
Foundation, \$99.95

"Orphan films" are those that are abandoned by the motion-picture marketplace. Because they have less immediate market value, orphans slip through the cultural net, and their preservation falls to nonprofit and public archives. These pictures come in many forms: documentaries and newsreels, avant-garde and independent works, amateur and home movies, animated and industrial films, and "silent" films from cinema's first 30 years.

Treasures from American Film Archives is a landmark collection that represents a large collaboration between several institutions that for years have worked to save orphan films from loss and destruction. It is now general knowledge that in the past, all films were made of highly volatile materials, and it is difficult to estimate the total number of films we've lost. One estimate of U.S. production suggests that only about 15 percent of all silent films survive. Archives preserve these fragile works through expensive copying onto more stable film bases, storing the originals under the cool, dry conditions that will ensure their survival.

The 50 preserved films on this four disc set, which has a running time of nearly 11 hours, were culled from 12 nonprofit archives by the National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPF). The foundation's chief criterion in making its selection was rarity, and indeed, 45 of

the films have never been available on video.

DVD is an ideal format to showcase this eclectic collection, and each disc can be run as a separate (and generally chronological) program. The short films, some running less than a minute, can be individually accessed. Each film is interactively linked to a special section, "About the Film" or "About the Archive" (from which it came), with narration by actor Laurence Fishburne. The boxed set also includes an excellent, 138-page illustrated book.

The earliest film in the collection is a 30-second *Blacksmithing Scene* shot in 1893 by the Edison Company. There are also two Edison peepshow kinetoscopes from 1894. *Three American Beauties*, a 40-second patriotic film from 1906, was colored by stencil on release prints using a separate cut-out stencil for each color, and was shown in nickelodeon theaters at the end of a program. It proved so popular that Edison's original negative wore out and had to be reshot, complete with in-camera dissolves.

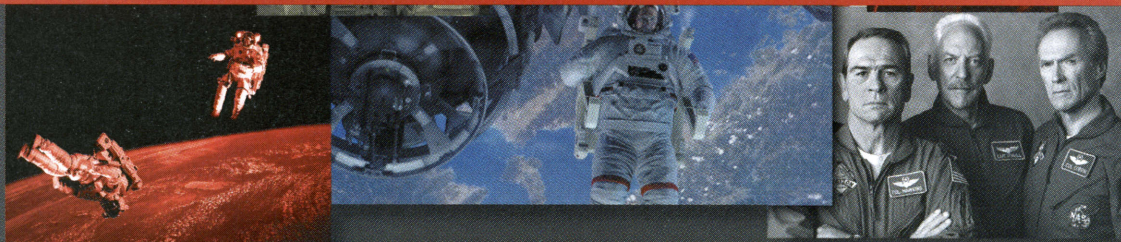
Several features are included in the collection, most notably *Hell's Hinges* (1922), a 64-minute William S. Hart Western; *Toll of the Sea* (1922), a two-color Technicolor feature; and *Snow White* (1916) a 63-minute adaptation of the classic tale by Famous Players Film Company. (Starring Marguerite Clark, this version of *Snow White* inspired a young Walt Disney, who attended a matinee for newsboys in Kansas City upon its original release. Disney's memory of this picture was the inspiration for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the first animated feature.)

The discs also offer amazing home-movie footage shot in 16mm aboard the Hindenburg a year before its

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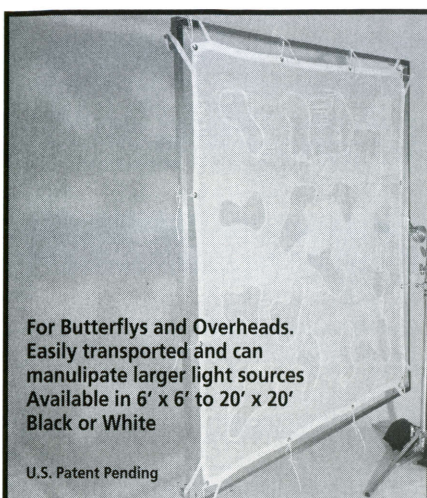


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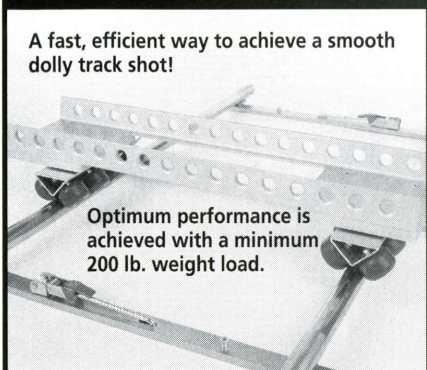
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disastrous crash, as well as some of the earliest sound home movies ever made. Groucho Marx's home movies from 1933 are very well-shot and reveal a Beverly Hills that is still quite rural. One of the eye-opening amateur films in the collection is *Cologne*, a 14-minute social documentary about a small German farm community in Minnesota; it was produced by local doctor Raymond W. Dowidat and his wife, Esther.

The pioneering 1924 independent film *The Chechahcos* was produced by the Alaska Moving Picture Corporation entirely in Alaska. Running 86 minutes, this silent melodrama boasts excellent production values, although *Variety*, upon the film's original release, commented that "its value commercially is still open to discussion in view of its difficult pronunciation."

The NFPF and all of the participating archives are to be commended for their contributions to this pioneering collection. It is of compelling interest for any student of American film.

— Ray Zone

***Rosemary's Baby* (1968)**
1.66:1 (16 x 9 Enhanced),
Dolby Digital Mono
Paramount, \$29.99

Generally regarded as one of the greatest horror films ever made, Roman Polanski's classic chiller is, in a sense, an odd fit for the genre. As production designer Richard Sylbert astutely points out in an interview included on this DVD, *Rosemary's Baby* is "the horror film with no horror in it."

In a deceptively breezy tone, the film chronicles the pregnancy of newlywed Rosemary Woodhouse (Mia Farrow), who becomes increasingly suspicious that her unborn child is threatened by a Satanic plot spearheaded by a pair of quirky elderly neighbors in her New York apartment building. A masterpiece of subtle directorial suggestion, the film only *implies* horror through Polanski's smart editing; judicious snippets of mysterious, barely overhead dialogue; and a ruthlessly subjective perspective (aided by the claustrophobic use of wide-

angle lenses). Modern horror auteurs (are there any?) would learn much from studying this perfectly calibrated motion picture, which remains as unnerving today as it was 30 years ago.

Rosemary's Baby is a highlight in the illustrious career of William Fraker, ASC, and Paramount's DVD transfer preserves his images with pleasing colors and excellent sharpness, with only the occasional loss of contrast in darker scenes (a common shortcoming in faded, older prints). Polanski and Fraker cunningly filmed much of the movie in the style of a Doris Day picture, with cheery, high-key lighting and bright colors. This visual strategy subverts the audience's preconceptions of a "horror movie," making Rosemary's vivid nightmares and increasing paranoia all the more powerful.

Rosemary's Baby is a virtual textbook on how to use visual composition to turn the screws on an audience, and the film contains one of Polanski's most brilliantly subtle images: a brief point-of-view shot from Rosemary's perspective (at the 28:35 mark on the disc) as she glances back toward a parlor where her husband, Guy (John Cassavetes) and an overly solicitous neighbor, Roman Castavet (Sidney Blackmer), are deeply immersed in conversation. Neither is visible through the parlor's doorway, but the covert intensity of their discussion is conveyed by a billowing plume of cigarette smoke. A seemingly banal shot, this moment later proves to be the film's decisive moment.

A commentary by Polanski would have been an ideal feature on this disc, and Paramount has tried to atone for its absence by instead including interviews with Polanski, Sylbert and legendary producer Robert Evans. But where is Fraker? Sylbert is the most engaging raconteur of the group, but it's a treat to hear all three of these old pros wax nostalgic about *Rosemary's Baby*, one of those rare Hollywood films in which all of the proper elements fell into place.

The only other supplement is a trippy, Flower Power-era documentary titled "Mia and Roman," directed by a digressive fellow named Hatami. High-

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BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

John Seale, A.C.S., A.S.C.

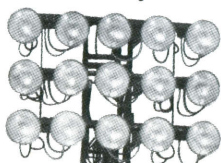
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-Steven Rosen, DENVER POST

“The movie is a technical marvel, with scenes of rampaging nature that approximate
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-Philip Wuntch, THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

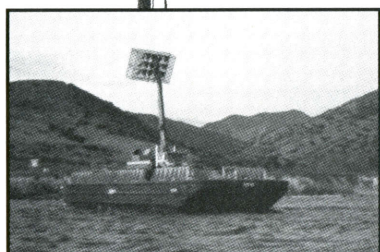


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lights include Farrow asserting that she's "not a flighty person" as the camera shows her performing a free-form dance on set, and a great little glimpse of Polanski arranging Farrow's arm *just so* for a scene set at Rosemary's kitchen table. As Polanski rightly states, "The details are everything."

— Chris Pizzello

***Get Carter* (1971)**

1.66:1 (16 x 9 Enhanced),

Dolby Digital Mono

Warner Bros., \$24.98

Veteran British director Mike Hodges, currently riding a wave of critical adulation for his sleeper art film *Croupier* (see *AC* August '00), made his bones with this diamond-hard study of vengeance and retribution in the British gangster underworld. Although *Get Carter* was recently remade as a vehicle for Sly Stallone, discerning viewers are strongly advised to seek out this thoughtfully assembled DVD of the absorbing and entertaining original. Michael Caine does a truly menacing turn as Carter, a ruthless mob killer who goes to brutal lengths to find those responsible for his brother's mysterious death. As an unstoppable instrument of revenge, Carter is perhaps rivaled only by Lee Marvin's Walker in John Boorman's similarly themed *Point Blank*.

An avowed enemy of slick cinematography ("[The influence of] commercials has almost destroyed filmmaking for me," Hodges complains on the disc), the director collaborated with cinematographer Wolfgang Suschitzky to craft an appropriately blunt, unsentimental look for *Get Carter* — this is one film that will never be endorsed by the British tourism industry! Making superb use of the seedy-as-hell Newcastle and other English locations, the filmmakers often trained long lenses on the actors as foreground objects passed through the frame to provide both visual depth and a voyeuristic perspective. Hodges even decided to go AWOL from one location for a few hours before filming a crucial scene, hoping for a sudden, unwelcome bout of sunshine to pass.

The DVD transfer is about what one can expect from a 30-year-old print. Nicks and scars are occasionally apparent, but in general *Get Carter* features decent clarity and accurate colors, though the blacks range from perfect in some scenes to a slightly soupy gray in others.

Well-respected in England but never given the chance it deserved in U.S. theaters, *Get Carter* has been lavished with special extras by Warner Bros. First and foremost is a very interesting audio commentary by Hodges, Caine and Suschitzky. Though the three were recorded separately, the DVD producers have done a good job of parceling out the most useful information from each. Hodges has great fun pointing out some of the unusual details that he included in some scenes, such as an enigmatic, six-fingered man highlighted during a brief cutaway in an early pub scene. The director also explains the surprising, almost Christian ethic that underscores the film's brutality, explaining that Carter's fate is a sort of karmic retribution for the manner in which he leads his life. Suschitzky discusses the nuts-and-bolts details involved in the location cinematography, while Caine appraises his great performance in his typically cheerful, unpretentious manner.

Also included on the disc are an old-school trailer that gives away far too much of the plot, and a short glimpse of one of the film's unsung heroes, composer Roy Budd, as he plays *Carter's* naggingly catchy jazz theme in his studio. The DVD authors pay tribute to Budd's highly distinctive score by including a music-only audio track as a listening option for the film.

— Chris Pizzello

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Production Slate

Through a Glass Darkly: Ullmann Analyzes Bergman by Stephen Pizzello

During their nine film projects together, director Ingmar Bergman and actress Liv Ullmann explored the depth and breadth of the human psyche. Many of the characters in these great Swedish pictures, including the roles played by Ullmann, appeared to be splinters of Bergman's own personality, and the auteur often used the fictional guises to

elderly writer (Erland Josephson), whose true identity — "Bergman" — is only disclosed in the film's written script. Living in isolation on a remote island, where he's working on a screenplay about a past love affair, the writer dreams up an attractive muse, Marianne (Lena Endre), who plays the lead role in his imagination. In flashbacks, we observe Marianne's friendly interactions with David (Krister Henriksson), a playwright who's also close to her husband, Markus (Thomas Hanzon), an internation-

sent the script to me when I was in Oslo about three years ago, and I thought it was wonderful — it was written more like a monologue than a traditional screenplay," Ullmann says during our interview, conducted in her suite at the Four Seasons Hotel in Los Angeles. Shifting a bit in the plush chair she's curled herself into, the actress adds that "the material was so personal that I told Ingmar, 'You really have to do this yourself.' He insisted that he didn't want to direct the film, though. I then suggested that I could do the studio work, and that he could do the preproduction and the editing, but he didn't want to do that either. I told him that my vision of the script would be very different from what he had imagined, but he thought that would be exciting. In a way, our situation was similar to what happens in the movie: a woman comes into the man's studio, and he wants to find out what she thinks. The story is really a dialogue between a screenwriter and a woman who knows him very well."

There are hints in Bergman's past work that the idea for *Faithless* had been germinating for some time. In the film, Marianne's surname is Vogler — a moniker that turns up in several other Bergman films, including *Hour of the Wolf* and *Persona*. Ullmann herself points out that in *Scenes From a Marriage* (in which she also appeared with Erland Josephson, as a woman named Marianne), a husband leaves his wife to go to Paris with another woman. "I've heard the true story from Ingmar's own life, and I'm sure he had it in his mind all these years," Ullmann agrees. "The way I see it, the David character is the writer in his younger years, and I said to Ingmar, 'The writer in the story must

The writer Bergman (Erland Josephson) consults with his muse, Marianne (Lena Endre), in a window seat at his home. This interior, a detailed replica of Ingmar Bergman's real workspace, was created within a soundstage at the Swedish State Television Company in Stockholm. Cinematographer Jörgen Persson says that one of his toughest tasks on the film was making the false background beyond the window look completely natural.



examine his own inner conflicts and neuroses.

With *Faithless*, the duo have taken this cinematic psychoanalysis one step further. Directing from a partially autobiographical script penned by Bergman, Ullmann puts the great filmmaker under a microscope in a fascinating narrative that ultimately issues a stern moral critique. Well-received at the 2000 Cannes Film Festival, the picture is slated for U.S. release this month.

The plot of *Faithless* focuses on the creative process of a nameless,

ally celebrated orchestra conductor, and the couple's young daughter, Isabelle (Michelle Gylemo). The friendship between David and Marianne soon blossoms into longing, and the pair arrange to meet in Paris for a romantic rendezvous. However, their plans for a brief, discreet interlude are soon complicated by a passion that provokes disastrous consequences for all concerned.

According to Ullmann, the story is based on a real incident from Bergman's life, which made her feel initially that he should direct the film himself. "Ingmar

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Marianne and her lover, David (Krister Henriksson), share a laugh during their romantic rendezvous in Paris, but their affair will eventually have a devastating effect upon Marianne's husband, Markus (Thomas Hanzon), and daughter, Isabelle (Michelle Gylemo).

be you, because he's called Bergman. And he just replied, 'Well, I couldn't think of another name.'" She laughs, but quickly adds that after she agreed to direct the film, "Ingmar and I didn't discuss it again — I just went ahead with it. He and I had no consultations during the production, because that was the deal we struck. He's very creative and controlling, and if he'd been involved it would have been tough on both of us."

After signing on to direct the film, Ullmann spent nearly a year in preproduction, writing down her ideas and even drawing her own set of storyboards. She also screened many of Bergman's films for a very specific reason. "I wanted *Faithless* to be a bit of an homage," she says. "In writing the script, Ingmar was making an homage to himself, but not a flattering one. In the finished film, there are certain sequences and images that recall scenes from Ingmar's films. For example, some of the scenes in Paris, when David and Marianne are riding in a boat on a lake, recall the comedies that Ingmar made very early in his career."

In striving to realize her vision,



Ullmann hired cinematographer Jörgen Persson, who had previously shot her 1992 directorial debut, *Sofie*. The cameraman, whose credits also include collaborations with renowned directors Lasse Hallström (*My Life as a Dog*) and Bille August (*Pelle the Conqueror*, *Best Intentions*, *Smilla's Sense of Snow* and *Les Misérables*), says his initial reading of the script convinced him that the film would require a very naturalistic look. "I tried to use as much natural light as I could," he relates. "For example, we used a lot of natural light on location at the villa where the conductor and his wife live, without adding a lot of big lights outside the windows. We had very good weather while we were filming those scenes, which really helped me to work that way. In situations where I was trying to simulate natural light, particularly during daytime interior setups, I would generally position HMI lights outside the window and bounce the light off of polystyrene boards to create soft 'daylight' and also to separate direct units to create 'daylight.' I would then use Kino Flos to provide a bit of fill light on the actors."

"For night interiors, I used practicals with additional Kino Flo lighting, and for night exteriors, I mounted HMIs on skylifts. The Kinos were very useful, since I generally worked at a stop of T2.8 or T3.5 with Zeiss Variable Prime lenses. Other than that, though, I mainly love to work with available light as much as possible. In fact, several of the film's day scenes were shot solely with available light."

Ullmann notes that she sought to tell a good deal of the story via close-ups of the characters' faces, as Bergman had done in *Scenes From a Marriage*. "I believe the landscape of faces is most important, and I also felt that it was very important to show the effect of the landscape in which this writer is living," she offers. "When we shot the exteriors of the island where he lives, I specifically wanted to show that this landscape, and the isolation of it, is reflected in his face. If I want to know something about someone, or understand them, I study their face, the way they sit, and other small details. Face-to-face connections

between people are important, and in all of Ingmar's other films, people come face to face with each other. In this one, however, it's as if the writer is face to face with himself; even when he's talking with the woman, she seems to be just another element of his personality."

In fact, the film's rocky beach exteriors were shot on Fårö, the island in the Baltic Sea where the real Bergman has lived since he shot *Persona* there in the mid-1960s. For interior scenes of the writer's studio, an exact replica of the great director's actual workspace was created on stage at the Swedish State Television Company (STV) in Stockholm, with a faux exterior built beyond the window. Persson says that one of his trickiest tasks on the show was making this background appear to be realistic. "To make the scenery outside the window look natural, we built a big reflecting 'sky' and bounced 12K HMIs into it," he explains. "To get a more directional light, we also bounced some 6K HMIs into [reflectors]. The shore was carefully created with real trees and bushes. The sea and sky were painted backdrops, and some reflective material was applied to the surface of the 'water.' The studio was a bit too small to get the depth we needed, and balancing the interior and exterior was critical. In the end, though, it all worked out fairly well."

Realizing that he would be capturing many close-ups, Persson opted to shoot the picture with Fuji film stocks running through his Arri 535A camera. "I always choose a film that seems to fit the subject and the story, and in my opinion, Fuji's emulsions have a nice, soft look that provides very nice skin tones," he says. "We used Fuji's 500 ASA stock [8572] for all of the interiors, and Fuji's 125 ASA stock [8532] for all of our exteriors, since it matched very well with the 72. On the male actors I used lighting that was a bit harder; I softened things up a bit on the women, but I didn't use any diffusion on the camera. The look was achieved strictly through the lighting." Persson adds that he employed some color correction on his lamps, as well as Rosco frost on windows and occasionally the Kino Flos. From time to

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Right: Marianne and the writer share an intimate moment in his studio as he attempts to make peace with his memories. Below right: In *Before Night Falls*, writer Reinaldo Arenas (Javier Bardem, lying in lower right corner) finds himself imprisoned in El Morro with Cuba's most ruthless prisoners.



time, he also used grad filters to control certain parts of the frame.

In one of the film's most striking shots, a distraught Marianne confronts her own reflection in a mirror as she considers the effect that her careless actions have had upon her daughter Isabelle. As Marianne gazes into the glass, which is rendered nearly invisible by the surrounding darkness, Isabelle's face appears in the background, where it seems to float between the twin images of Marianne's face. Reminiscent of the famous double images and merging faces in *Persona*, the sequence was achieved in a straightforward but elegant manner. "We hung some black material behind the little girl and brought the light up on her with a dimmer," Persson recalls. "To light Marianne's face, I simply used Kino Flos."

Kinos also proved handy during filming of an elaborate Steadicam shot that provides an introductory tour of the married couple's home. The sequence was shot on location at the villa, with operator Mike Tiverios guiding the camera around the interior, where it glides past pictures on the walls and other family mementos. "We shot that scene at dusk so we could match the light outside," Persson notes. "We used Kino Flos to bounce light around corners, using door opening and backlight from the ceiling. Kinos are very useful that way, because they're much easier to hide than larger lighting units."

Considering the film's moral message, Ullmann indicates that she was attempting to make a statement on two levels. In a more general sense, she says she wanted to make a film of substance, with a depth that's more common in films from the 1960s and '70s. "I think so-called art films should always be in vogue, because if we keep losing the ability to relate to people and what happens within them, we will lose our sense of those values," she maintains. "There are no values if you're just showing people shooting other people — you don't care about those types of characters. Children today are wrapped up in violent videogames and movies, in which the stories are all about killing and destroying people. That sort of thing just

devalues human life, and I think filmmakers and everyone who's part of the media should take their responsibilities more seriously."

At the same time, she recognizes that the emotional violence in *Faithless* can be just as crushing, in the dramatic sense. "To me, there's one victim in this story, and it's not Marianne, who's a grownup making her own choices — it's the little girl, Isabelle. My hope is that when the girl grows up, maybe she will understand what happened to her family, and she'll be able to overcome it. In my mind, the little girl represents a part of Ingmar, just as all of the other characters do; there's certainly a lot of Ingmar in the woman's husband, who loves music so much. But that particular character — the child who was never loved or recognized — appears in many of Ingmar's films and always reflects his own painful memories. After *Faithless*, I don't think he will ever write about his life story again, because I think he's achieved a kind of closure. He's watched the film many times on his island, and he told me he cried when he saw the mirror scene."

Free in Spirit by Rachael K. Bosley

Before Night Falls tells the story of the late Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas (played by Javier Bardem), whose homosexuality and penchant for publishing books abroad — without the govern-





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Cinematographer

ment's permission — did not endear him to the Castro regime. Arenas was 14 when the Communists came to power, and he was 20 when his first novel, *Singing From the Well*, was published in Cuba. He subsequently published eight novels outside of Cuba, many of which were internationally acclaimed and all of which were banned in his native country. Arenas was imprisoned for two years as an enemy of the state in El Morro, home to Cuba's roughest criminals, before he was expelled to America via the Mariel boat lift, which deposited thousands of Cuban "undesirables" in Florida in 1980. Arenas eventually settled in New York, where he was diagnosed with AIDS; he committed suicide in 1990.

Based on Arenas's memoir of the same name, *Before Night Falls* surveys these events and marks the second directorial effort of Julian Schnabel, the renowned painter and sculptor who took his first steps as a filmmaker in 1996 with another portrait of an artist, *Basquiat*. Schnabel maintains that he knows little about photography — he's never even owned a camera — and says he wanted to try some visual strategies in *Before Night Falls* that he didn't attempt in *Basquiat*. One result was that the show's original cinematographer was soon dismissed; Schnabel subsequently recruited his camera operator, Guillermo "Memo" Rosas, and cinematographer Xavier Pérez Grobet to act as co-directors of photography.

Thanks to Mexico's burgeoning film industry, Grobet and Rosas had already worked together several times, and both cameramen had also accumulated credits on major U.S. productions shot in their country. Rosas, who directed and photographed documentaries for 20 years, was a camera operator on films such as *Titanic*, *Stigmata* and *Romeo + Juliet*. Grobet, a graduate of the Mexico Cinematography Institute, started out as a camera assistant on *Revenge* and *Total Recall* before making his debut as director of photography on Carlos Carrera's *Benjamin's Woman* in 1990. His credits include Mexico's 1999 box-office hit *Sex, Shame & Tears*, directed by Antonio Serrano.

Schnabel, Grobet and Rosas say they enjoyed a highly collaborative atmosphere on *Before Night Falls*, which was shot on location in Mexico (standing in for Cuba) and New York City beginning in August 1999. "The very important thing was that we were working with a painter — an artist, not a formal filmmaker," Rosas notes. "Julian knew what results he wanted, and we all got together and discussed the best way to get them." Grobet concurs, adding, "We were making decisions as we went along. Where we connected was in trying to understand what Julian's ideas were. The film has powerful images because of who Julian is and what he wanted."

"The great thing about painting is that I don't have to talk to anyone or explain anything to anyone," Schnabel says with a laugh.

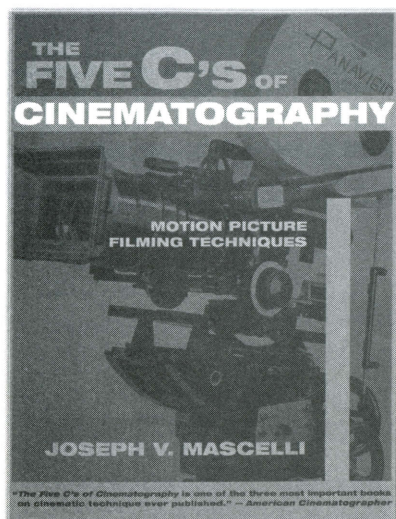
Grobet and Rosas agreed to roughly divide their labor by having Rosas focus on much of the camerawork and Grobet focus on the lighting. Rosas estimates that he operated the A-camera, an Arriflex BL, on about 99 percent of the film; Grobet frequently handled the B-camera, an Arriflex 535. Both cameras were outfitted with Zeiss Superspeed lenses, and the cameramen employed chocolate filters and occasionally a #81EF to achieve the "*Life* magazine in the 1950s" look that Schnabel sought. "Everything in Cuba kind of stood still in 1959, and that's the look I wanted, even though there are shifts throughout the film," the director explains. "I wanted something like the color of Albert Lewin's *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*." The shifts in the film's look were accomplished with a combination of Kodak stocks: Vision 200T 5274 (pushed one stop), Vision 800T 5289 and some reversal stock. "We were using the stocks in a way you usually don't, such as using the 800 during the day just to get the grain and the texture," Grobet notes, adding that the production was his first experi-

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Arenas asks Bon Bon (Johnny Depp), a drag queen with a legendary penchant for smuggling objects out of prison in an anatomically challenging manner, to help him sneak one of his novels out of the facility.

ence with reversal stock. "Julian wasn't afraid of trying things, and neither were we."

Schnabel says he wanted the film to convey "the heightened sense that you're being told a story," which led him to employ some unexpected POV shots and unusual angles for key scenes. "I wanted to use the screen as a physical object, as though it could fall on top of you, which is probably something that comes out of painting and sculpture," Schnabel says. "I want the frame to go *past* the rectangle, not fit into it. I'm interested in depth of field, in [allowing] things that aren't necessarily nameable to become the protagonists of a scene."

Rosas elaborates, "What interests Julian is the overall composition, which includes surfaces and colors, and he wanted us to add layers [visually]. He was always telling me not to look through the eyepiece, saying, 'Do what you feel.'" Rosas estimates that he shot about 70 percent of *Before Night Falls* handheld, a choice Schnabel says he made because he "wanted to create the sense of someone breathing."

According to Grobet, the lighting strategy for the film was designed to be as "natural" as possible. He used only tungsten lighting and often shot only with available light. "I had to put away all of what I was used to," Grobet notes.

"[The lighting] was about trying to get the feeling of the place, and most of the time, the place told me what the light had to be."

Grobet and Rosas agree that the most difficult sequence to film was a scene in which one of Arenas's former boyfriends attempts to steal away in a hot-air balloon that Arenas and others had been planning to use for a group escape to America. The group has taken refuge in an old, abandoned church that is missing part of its roof, and they are planning to simply float the balloon up through the hole. "We were shooting in a warehouse that was originally a church, and it was a great location, but the problem was that there was no hole in the roof," Grobet recalls. "The ceiling was so high that it was impossible to rig anything up there, so I floated three helium balloons and used Maxi-Brutes, 20Ks and a lot of Kino Flos to simulate daylight coming down through a hole." He suggested using CGI to create the hole itself, and when Schnabel agreed, the crew placed greenscreen all around the upper reaches of the bodega for that shot. Rosas says some "very fancy crane maneuvers" were necessary to create the illusion that the balloon was actually floating through the hole.

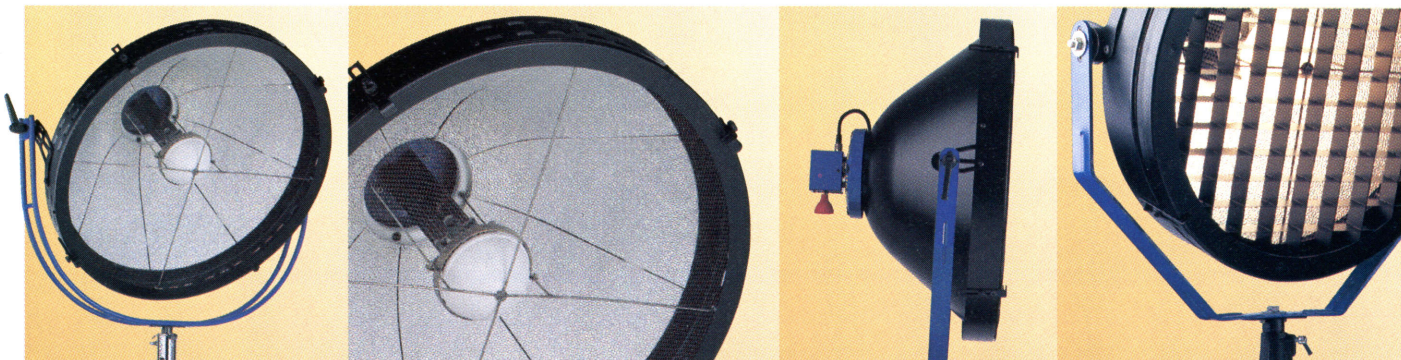
Rosas also suggested the use of a crane for two shots that form the visual

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Near right: Co-director of photography Guillermo "Memo" Rosas, left, strikes a pose with director Julian Schnabel on location in Mexico. Far right: Co-director of photography Xavier Pérez Grobet lines up a shot on location in New York City.



bookends of the film. These scenes feature Arenas as a small boy, playing in a deep hole in his family's yard. At the beginning of the film, the camera starts out down in the hole next to the boy, then travels up and skims backward across the ground, finally pulling up to a height that's level with the treetops; the film

ends with that motion in reverse. When Schnabel explained what he wanted, Rosas suggested a crane shot using a Hothead remote and a snorkel lens to get down in the hole and close to the boy. "That was a difficult shot, and I had to explain to Julian why the snorkel would work," Rosas recalls. For Schnabel, the

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shot beautifully underscores Arenas's observation that "trees have a secret life that is only revealed to those who are willing to climb them." The director adds with a smile, "I'm talking to the people who want to climb the trees."

Grobet and Rosas say that Schnabel's perspective enlarged their views of film's possibilities and enriched their approaches to the medium. "I have the impression that compared to *Basquiat*, this film is more like his paintings, and that, to me, is an asset," Grobet says. Rosas adds, "Industry films are something we do for our careers, but with Julian, we related to film in a whole other way." At press time, both cameramen were busy on U.S. productions shooting in Mexico; Rosas was serving as second-unit director of photography on a Hallmark biopic of Fidel Castro ("Castro again, believe it or not!" he says with a laugh), while Grobet was shooting the Showtime production *In the Time of the Butterflies*.

Schnabel says he has no plans for a third feature, and is looking forward to returning to more solitary artistic endeavors. "The great thing about painting is that I don't have to talk to anyone or explain anything to anyone," he says with a laugh. "On a film, we're all working together. There must be a part of my brain that can do that, though, because it's comfortable for me. As a director, I'm the ruler of my own world — it's hard work, but there are no grownups in it."

► AC Wins Folio: Award

Capping an award-winning year, *American Cinematographer* was recently named Best Entertainment Business Publication at the *Folio* Editorial Excellence Awards, held on November 1 at the Hilton Hotel in New York City. Earlier this year, *AC* earned Maggie Awards from the Western Publications Association in two major categories: Best Overall Trade Publication and Best Communications, Advertising or

Entertainment Publication.

AC executive editor Stephen Pizzello, who had submitted the March 1999 80th anniversary issue for consideration in the *Folio* competition, attended the New York dinner ceremony to accept the magazine's plaque. One of the competition's judges commented, "From its reclaiming a classic cover from the 1920s to the outstanding retrospectives, *American Cinematographer* captured my attention and my interest. The production quality of the book — paper, inks, printing — completes what is, in my mind, the best of its class."

Nearly 400 magazines entered the 2000 Editorial Excellence Awards, with 47 publications competing as finalists. *AC* finished ahead of *Entertainment Design* magazine to take the top prize (or Gold Award) among entertainment trade publications. The entertainment category for consumer magazines was won by *TV Guide*. ■

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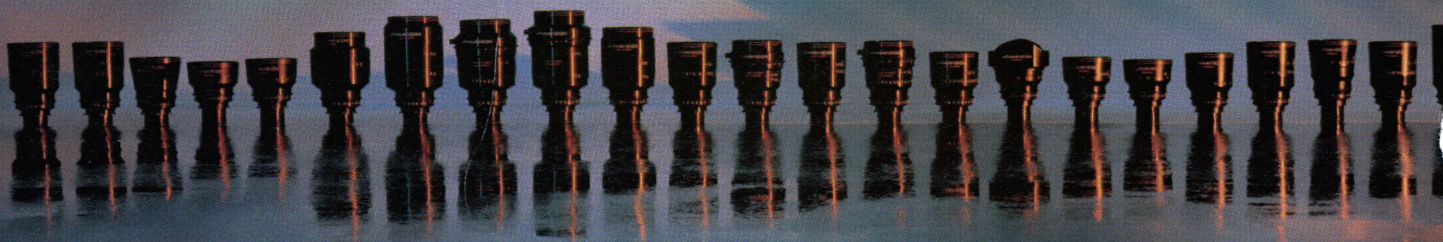
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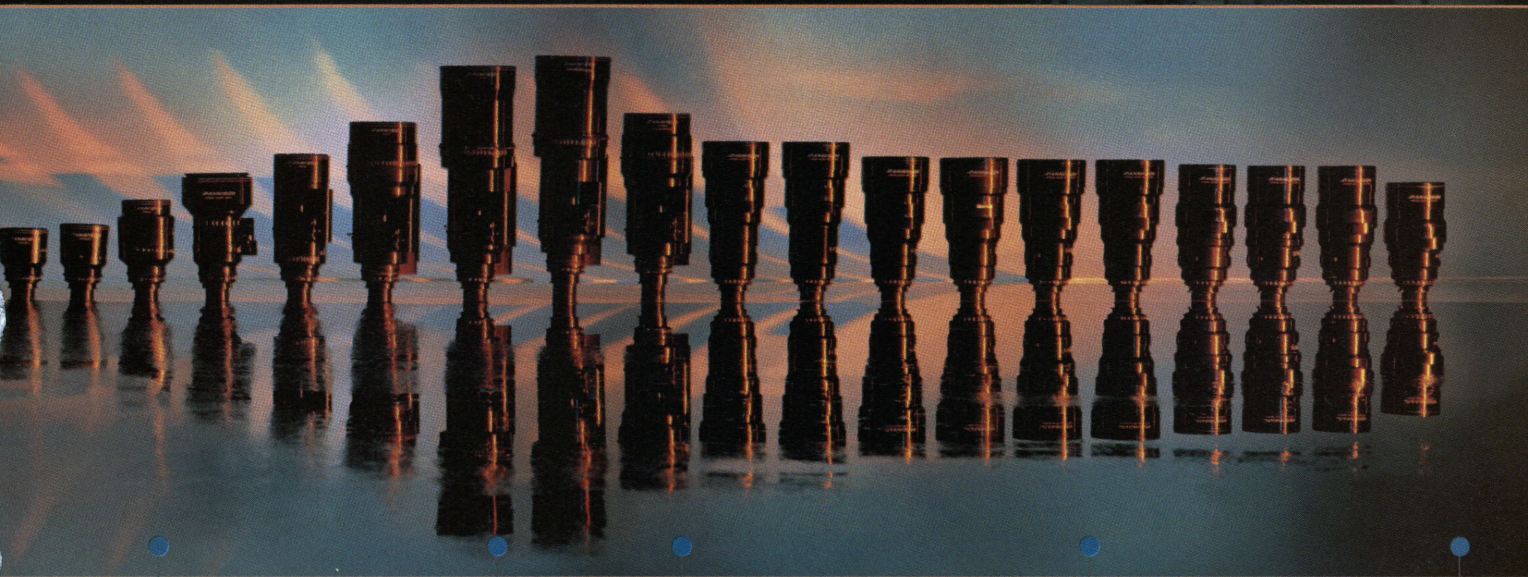
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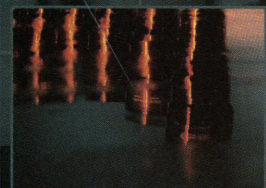
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Sole. Survivor



Director Robert Zemeckis and cinematographer Don Burgess, ASC take to the high seas and white sandy beaches of Fiji to tell the ultimate story of a man stranded on a remote island.

by Jay Holben

Unit photography by Francois Duhamel and Zade Rosenthal

Director Robert Zemeckis has always demonstrated a zest for testing himself. From the early days of his career, Zemeckis has pushed technological boundaries time and time again with films like the *Back to the Future* trilogy, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, *Death Becomes Her*, *Forrest Gump* and *Contact*. But with his most recent endeavor, *Cast Away*, Zemeckis has abandoned most of his technical wizardry to undertake a much more personal investigation of

the human spirit. In what might be the ultimate cinematic challenge, Zemeckis follows a single figure through a tale of isolation, survival and enlightenment — foregoing dialogue, character interaction and dynamic camera blocking for the majority of the film.

Oscar-winning actor Tom Hanks came up with the concept for *Cast Away* while he was working on *Apollo 13*, and he later teamed with screenwriter William Broyles to bring his vision to life on the page.

Photos courtesy of 20th Century Fox and DreamWorks.



The story follows Chuck Noland (Hanks), a Federal Express systems engineer whose personal and professional lives are ruled by the clock. He is devoted to a career that matches his compulsive personality: every moment of every day is scheduled to the most minute detail in order to achieve maximum success through maximum control. While en route to troubleshoot a shipping problem in Malaysia, however, his manic lifestyle is abruptly and irrevocably altered when his plane is downed by a violent tropical storm. After washing up on the shore of a small deserted island, Noland is left stranded and stripped of everyday conveniences, and must endure a life without any human contact for more than four years.

To bring this saga to life, Zemeckis teamed once again with director of photography Don Burgess, ASC, whose love affair with photography began at a relatively early age. "When I was in junior high, my older sister began taking photog-

raphy classes in high school," Burgess recalls. "She had set up a black-and-white lab in the bathroom of our house, and I quickly caught the bug for fooling around with images."

After his own progress through high school, Burgess went on to the Art College of Design in Los Angeles. He later began working with second-unit cameraman and family friend Johnny Stephens, indulging his passion for photography and outdoor sports by shooting adventure documentaries and second-unit action sequences. Burgess also tried his hand at first-unit photography on a number of low-budget independent features, but it was the second-unit work that kept the phone ringing. "Everyone gets labeled and put into categories," he comments. "Once you establish yourself in a certain area, people begin to think of you in that one way, and it's very difficult to break out of the mold. I walked away from second-unit work for a while and tried to break into the A-unit realm

as a lighting cameraman, but it just wasn't working. I got stuck back in low-budget films and cable movies and couldn't break out, so I finally took a gamble and went back to second-unit work for a while."

His return to action and effects photography would land him work on some of the biggest summer blockbuster films: *Back to the Future II & III*, *Batman Returns* and *Backdraft*. While working on the *Back to the Future* series, Burgess developed a relationship with director Zemeckis, who subsequently hired the cameraman to shoot an episode of the TV series *Tales From the Crypt*. Burgess returned to second-unit work on Zemeckis's next picture, *Death Becomes Her*, but the director soon promoted his friend to the rank of first-unit cinematographer on *Forrest Gump*. Since then, the team has worked together on three films: *Contact*, *What Lies Beneath* and now *Cast Away*.

The first portion of *Cast Away* follows Hanks's Noland from a trou-

Opposite page:
After a devastating plane crash, harried Federal Express systems engineer Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks) finds himself stranded on a remote island in the South Pacific.
This page:
Shooting on the Fijian island of Monu-riki required an unusual degree of organization because of the area's extreme tides and fickle weather.
Cinematographer Don Burgess, ASC testifies, "We calculated that we had one to two hours max in any given spot before the camera was either underwater or we had no water in our shot at all!"

Sole Survivor

Before his ill-fated trip to Malaysia, Noland goes on a troubleshooting mission to Moscow. Burgess employed a lot of Steadicam and crane work in the early part of the film to convey the hectic nature of Noland's routine. Bottom: Director Robert Zemeckis (center) discusses a setup with Hanks and Burgess.



bleshooting mission in Moscow to his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee, and then to Malaysia. After the plane crash, the story follows his first month on the island as he learns to adapt to his new existence. Once he's settled, however, the narrative leaps forward to four years later, when we find Noland to be a very different man. To facilitate this dramatic break in the plot's arc, the production shot roughly in continuity and then went on hiatus for a full year — enabling Hanks to endure a stark physical transformation in which he lost nearly 60 pounds and grew his hair and beard to epic lengths.

To further separate the story's different time periods, the filmmakers created a visual dichotomy. As the film opens and we experience the professional Noland at work, smoothing out delivery schedules and making sure that every parcel lives up to FedEx's "absolutely, positively overnight" mantra, the camerawork is fast and furious. This sense of dynamic energy was created with a good deal of Steadicam and crane work. "We've got the camera moving all over the place," Burgess confirms. "Then, on Christmas Eve, Noland jumps on a plane and heads off to the South Pacific to deal with the next set of problems in Malaysia. He's riding

in the jump seat of a FedEx plane that's full of cargo, and an incredible storm drives the plane down. Once Noland washes up on the island, the camera just stops moving. It almost literally comes to a screeching halt — we barely pan and tilt."

Zemeckis offers, "We made a conscious effort to put the audience in Noland's perspective. We completely strayed away from typical camera operation and pretty much worked from total lock-offs to create a feeling of isolation. If the camera does pan or tilt, it only does so in 90-degree increments, and it doesn't follow the action per se — it moves at its own pace. It's a bit like a surveillance camera in that sense: if it's panning with Tom walking along the beach, it's not following his pace, but rather moving very slowly along its own path, and if he happens to step outside the frame for a moment or so, all the better. Holding to these rules turned out to be quite challenging and a lot of fun. The idea was to make the audience feel the monotony of his life, so we didn't want to impose anything stylistically on that part of the movie that didn't belong there."

Burgess affirms that he and Zemeckis found that "the toughest part of blocking and shooting this film was the whole section where the camera doesn't move. Our instincts just don't work like that. One of the reasons that he and I ultimately hooked up and stayed together is because we have a similar sense of where the camera needs to be and how it should move to tell the story. When it came time to do the static shots, we both had trouble making them work.

"Generally speaking, in blocking and framing a shot, the most important thing is to make sure the audience is looking where you want them to look. You have to make sure they clearly understand the story point that is taking place, and that they grasp all of the pertinent infor-



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CAST
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Noland enjoys a rare quiet moment with his wife (Helen Hunt).

mation while sort of ignoring everything that's not important. Short of force-feeding the issue by blacking out everything else in the frame or providing blinking arrows, this is primarily accomplished through shot composition and careful blocking. In this case, however, we were locked into our compositional style, and everything had to take place in the frame without the camera moving to capture the action."

Of course, as Zemeckis points out, "this doesn't mean that we shot the entire film in one big, wide shot. We did close shots, inserts and coverage, but we kept it all minimal and within the bounds of this simple concept — which worked out beautifully, both artistically and practically. This visual choice was something that worked perfectly for the story, but at the same time, it would have been insane to bring remote heads, camera cranes and things like that to an island, drag it all through the sand and expect any of it to work. We had to approach things from a minimalist frame of mind, because you can't really bring high-tech equipment into a harsh environment and expect it to work on cue within an extremely tight schedule."

Naturally, the final arbiter of

the production's scheduling decisions was Mother Nature. The island chosen for Noland's habitat was Monu-riki in the northwestern Mamanuca-I-Ra group of the Fiji Islands (25 miles by boat from Nadi). The site is positioned at 17 degrees, 37 minutes South and 177 degrees, 2 minutes East, and life can be pretty volatile that close to the equator. Violent tropical storms can literally brew up in minutes, and daylight is foreshortened by hours. "We learned that the only way to really get a day's work done was to leapfrog the crews and cameras," says Burgess. "One camera was always rolling. While we were rolling on A-cam, a completely separate crew was building the B-cam rig on another set. That way, as soon as we showed up there, everything was ready. Nobody was saying things like, 'Oh, we just need to fix this,' or 'Let me tweak that bounce a bit,' because we were dealing with really extreme weather elements and tides. If we weren't ready to go the moment we stepped onto the set, or if we wasted as much as one hour, we wouldn't get the shot."

"With the extreme nature of the tides, we calculated that we had one to two hours max in any given spot before the camera was either

underwater or we had no water in our shot at all! It all happened that fast, and the time it takes to set up scaffolding or any other gear near the ocean is really surprising. As a rule, we always had to have our nine or 10 setups for the day all laid out on paper the night before: the camera, lens and filter — and every other piece of equipment that we would need — was decided upon the night before. Every department had to be totally dialed into what they would need for each setup.

"While we were working on one set, I would drift off to the other setup as often as I could to help make sure that every detail was in place. I always had an operator on the rigging set to keep the camera focused in on the scene, so that a [rigging] that was left over from the day before could be moved [if necessary]. We also had to be aware of boats drifting into the background, and make sure that footprints in the foreground were taken care of as soon as possible. Everybody [knew] that *THE SHOT HAS TO HAPPEN AT 11 O'CLOCK*, period!

"It was really amazing to see the choreography of all the people who were focused on their particular task for that particular day," Burgess marvels. "Things had to be done that way, because otherwise you could blow half a day in the blink of an eye. Fortunately, Bob is a director who can visualize things very clearly, and say, 'That's fine. The camera is going to be here, we can shoot this direction, and this is what Tom is going to do.' He knows how to commit to things, and we had to commit to the smallest detail months before we actually rolled in order to pull off what we were trying to do."

In order to work out when and where to shoot on the island, Burgess relied upon a Global Positioning System (GPS) device, which provided him with sun data. "We'd combine that data with our tide chart, and those two elements pretty

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Sole Survivor

Top: Burgess didn't use any artificial lighting for sunny day scenes on the island. Instead, he directed the location's harsh sunlight with some muslin and Griffolyn bounces set up a short distance away, and used 4' x 4' beadboard bounce cards to enhance close-ups. Bottom: With a helpful push from a snorkeling crewmember, Hanks paddles his way to the deserted island. For this scene, the crew shot from a motorized platform, but in more turbulent surf, the production used a Carolina Skiff (see photo on page 46) to keep Hanks safe from spinning propellers.



much dictated how we would shoot," he says.

"It helped a great deal that I had a background as a documentary cameraman, and that I'd done a lot of outdoor, adventure-oriented documentaries," Burgess adds. "The idea of going to Fiji to shoot was much more appealing to me than going to Stage 27. I like those types of adventures, which is half the battle — you *have* to like that kind of work in order to avoid losing your mind out there. We carefully crewed the show with other guys who were into that sort of thing, because it can be incredibly grueling: the hours aren't normal; you live on boats and trudge

through sand, water and dirt all day long; and you have no life whatsoever. We worked from sunup to sundown every day in the heat and water, working on terrain and boats that were not even close to being level. Certain people can do that and enjoy it, and other people will just hate it. There really are very few things more difficult than taking motion-picture equipment out to sea."

Aside from the show's logistical challenges, Burgess also had to create two separate looks for the island. "Fiji is a paradise," he asserts. "It has beautiful, white sandy beaches and palm trees. It's the kind of place

where you dream of going to get away from it all, but in our film, it's also a man's prison." Burgess therefore decided to take two completely different approaches; the first encompasses the initial month of Noland's captivity, and the second unfolds after the four-year break. For the early scenes on the island, the cinematographer used Eastman Kodak Vision 250D 5246 as his working stock, employing a 1/8 White ProMist filter to accentuate the island's appeal. To render Noland's world after the four-year gap, the cinematographer switched to Kodak's EXR 100T 5248, sans ProMist, to lend the island a bleaker, more contrasty look. "5248 is by far the most contrasty tungsten stock out there, and switching from daylight balance to tungsten [with an 85] lent the same location a totally different feel," Burgess notes. "In addition to switching to a higher-contrast tungsten stock, we overexposed by 1 to 1 1/2 stops to create a very hot, almost desaturated look. I had to find a way to turn this lush, beautiful landscape into something harsh and ugly, so I let the highlights burn and the shadows fall pretty deep. This island is no paradise — it's Noland's torment.

"For day scenes on the island, I didn't use any artificial lighting at all, with the exception of one rainy sequence in which we needed some backlight. I didn't use any overheads at all; I just worked with the harsh, raw sunlight at the equator. I did play with 12-foot-by-12-foot muslin and Griffolyn bounces at a bit of a distance. For close work, we also used a lot of 4-foot-by-4-foot beadboard bounce cards that we'd fly in just to get the direction of the source right and to fill in the necessary details. I like 4-by-4 beadboards quite a bit, and I used a lot of them when Tom moved through the set. They're easy to maneuver into the right position as the shot is taking place.

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Sole Survivor

The production used a Carolina Skiff to shoot Noland's attempts to escape the island by raft. "The reefs in that area are extremely shallow, so we couldn't have a motor hanging down [off the boat]," Burgess says. "More importantly, I had to take Tom Hanks out into major surf, and I didn't want a spinning propeller to make a bad situation worse."



scenarios, you're always going to have more room to play with at the top [of the film's exposure curve] than you are at the bottom," Burgess continues. "You always have to protect the shadow areas. We were dealing with hard shadows on a face against a bright, sandy beach. We had to work with extreme contrasts, and we were always trying to beat that bear."

"Of course, sometimes you get the bear and sometimes the bear gets you," he concedes with a laugh. "I shot a lot of light-study stills during our location scouts, and while combining those with my GPS and sun data, I made notes about the best time of day to be at any particular location. Ultimately, you can't always be where you want to be, but you've got to try to make it work; if you can't, you have to be honest and say, 'I can't do that shot in the morning, I can only do it in the afternoon.' The other people involved in that process are going to reply, 'Okay, what time?' — and you'd better have your homework done so you can give them the right information. You've got to spend time in preproduction learning about your locations and their limitations. I did everything I could to schedule things so that the sun would be working with us. If I hadn't,

we'd have spent a lot of time flying up big silks or blacks to try and fight it. This type of filmmaking is much more efficient if you work with the sun instead of against it."

In addition to the two different daylight looks he created for the island, Burgess employed two different nighttime looks for the first portion of the film: one for all of the night scenes before Noland figures out how to make a fire, and the other for the subsequent sequences, in which he has a working light source. "The approach to the nighttime sequences was pretty minimal on both accounts," he maintains. "Early on, Bob and I talked about separating the quality of the night shots for pre-fire and post-fire sequences, and we decided to use a new kind of day-for-night approach to all of the pre-fire sequences. Instead of using filters or merely underexposing and printing dark, we opted to do CGI sky-replacement work on all of the day-for-night sequences. Once we made that decision, we simply had to perform tests to find the right contrast ratios that would make the look work. I underexposed the night sequences by 2 to 2 1/2 stops and worked to keep the sun in a back or back-cross position to provide a bit

of separation from the background. The scenes were then digitized by Ken Ralston at Sony Imageworks, where they dropped in an incredible night sky, darkened the scenes to match it, and then output the sequences back to film. I'm extremely happy with the final effect."

For scenes that occur after Noland discovers how to make his own fire, the production switched to night-for-night photography, and Burgess employed custom-made fixtures to enhance the natural firelight. "We designed some really great flicker lights on *Contact* using MR-16 globes, because they have a really fast on/off response," he details. "On *Cast Away*, we put several of them together in a single fixture so that we could create a number of different chase patterns that looked organic and non-repetitive. The units were small enough to be put [almost] anywhere: behind the fire, behind a tree or right next to Tom. They were also easy to control and shape to get the right quality of light for each scene."

"We also made a few bigger fixtures to cover more ground on the larger night shots; we hooked them all into a computer dimmer board to control them individually and create

JOHN TOLL, ASC



Digital photo by Owen Roizman, ASC, using the Kodak DC-4800.

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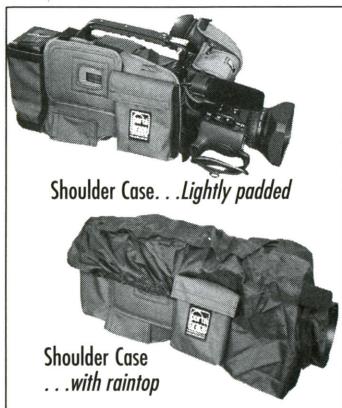
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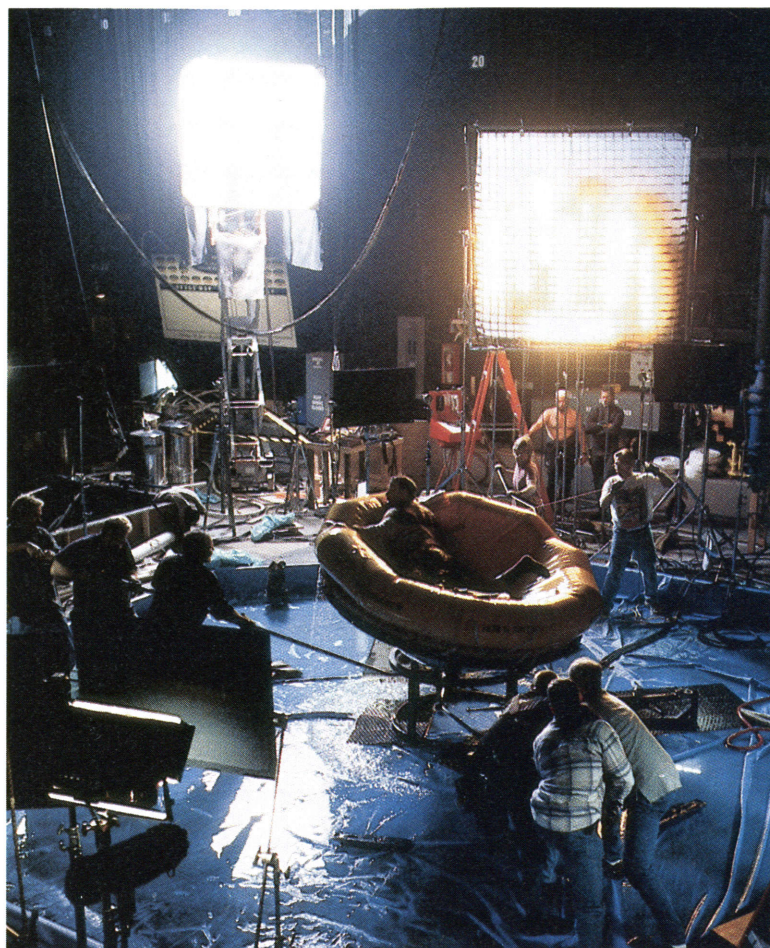
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Sole Survivor



The production worked in the more controllable confines of a studio soundstage to capture additional shots of Noland in his airplane life raft.

a very natural-looking firelight. We did create some moonlight and backlight, but very little, because as soon as we turned on the moonlight it started to look like Hollywood lighting. We'd often start with that light and eventually dial it out to use just the tiniest bit — just enough so that we could tie Tom into the environment and see where he was. I was always fighting the levels to decide just how much of the background I had to illuminate to create that effect. I was working at the bottom [of the film's exposure curve] for a long time, and that's a nerve-wracking place for a cameraman to be. I was constantly relying on a spot meter to calculate exactly how much of the texture we'd be able to read behind Tom.

"Conceptually, this was one of

the more difficult areas of the film for me to come to terms with," Burgess says. "Normally, you pitch a concept of what night looks like to an audience, and you stick to it for the course of the film. But we were taking two totally different concepts, two totally different looks, and mixing them together in the same movie." He adds that the night-for-night sequences were photographed on Vision 500T 5279, while night sequences requiring visual effects were captured Vision 200T 5274, which offered the tighter grain structure needed by the effects house.

Burgess chose to shoot *Cast Away* with Panavision cameras and Primo lenses, working in the spherical 1.85:1 aspect ratio. "We kicked around the idea of shooting this film in 'Scope [widescreen] during

preproduction," he reveals. "But after looking at the artist's renderings, the locations and some still photographs, we decided that the film worked better in the 1.85:1 format than it did in 2.35:1. The vertical shape of the island was one of the primary factors influencing that decision."

A new tool the cinematographer employed on the production was the Panavision Millennium XL camera, which was put to the test mainly during the company's time on the open sea. "Panavision has come up with a design for a truly handheld camera," Burgess attests. "It's smaller, lighter and a lot more maneuverable than its bigger brothers and sisters."

In the film, Noland eventually decides he'd rather die at sea trying to get home than perish on the island. His previous attempts at escape by sea were thwarted by the island's equivalent of prison walls: the violent waves that surround it. Braving these waves was a challenge not only for the character, but also for the filmmakers. To shoot Noland's attempted escape by raft, the production moved to the island of Namotu, one of the world's surfing hotspots. "We were lucky that Hanks is a surfer and was very comfortable in the breaking waters," Burgess says. "We were working in anywhere from 4- to 8-foot swells, which have incredible power behind them. However, a second unit was working off the coast of Tavarua, a neighboring island, in 10- to 15-foot swells!

"We mounted the camera in a Hydroflex water housing on a bungee rig attached to a Carolina Skiff, a small jet boat that's practically unsinkable. We designed rigs so that we could hard-mount Tom's raft to the Carolina Skiff in one of four positions, which we called North Carolina (bow/front side), South Carolina (aft/rear side), East Carolina (starboard/right side) and West Carolina (port/left side). We could

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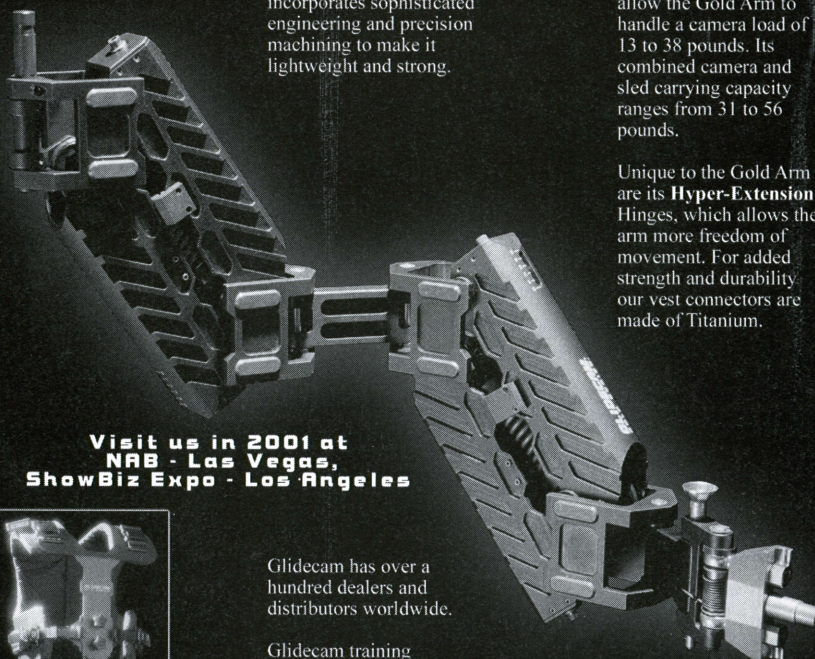
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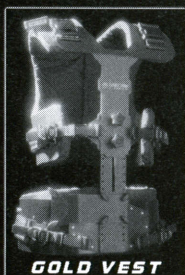


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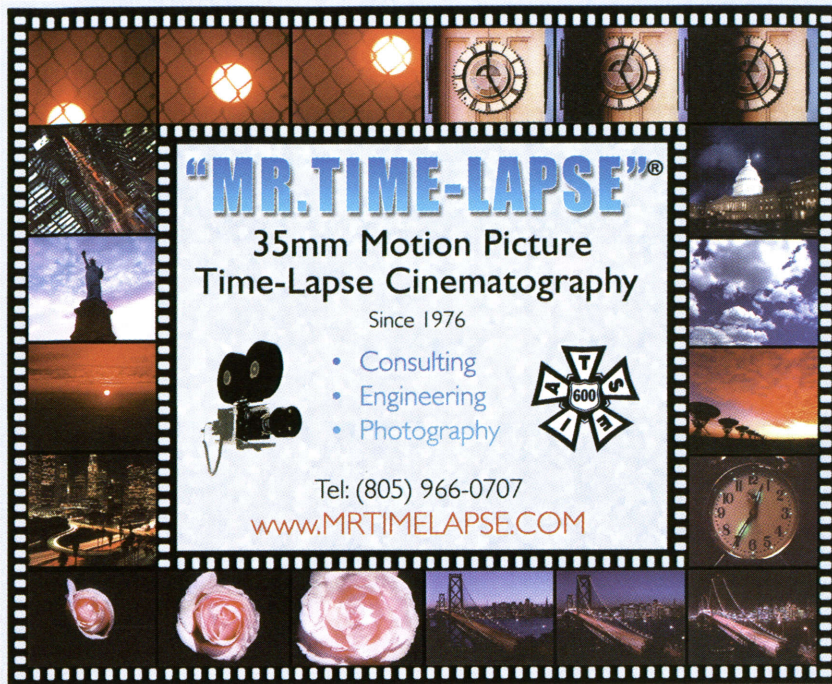
Sole Survivor

literally power right through 3- to 4-foot waves with Tom attached to look as if he was rowing."

Burgess says a number of factors led the filmmakers to choose a jet boat. "One was that the reefs in that area are extremely shallow, so we couldn't have a motor hanging down. More importantly, I knew I had to take Tom Hanks out into major surf, where a boat could flip over at any time; I didn't want a spinning propeller to make a bad situation worse! I knew that jet propulsion would be a lot safer for everyone involved, so we settled on the Carolina. It allowed us to maneuver the raft into position and work ourselves into the sweet spot of the waves to get the best shots. It was a pretty wild rodeo ride out there, and we had to bail out a few times, but I'm sure that footage will make for a great sequence!

"I was also careful to bring in the bungee rigs and not hard-mount the cameras to the skiff," Burgess adds. "Obviously, when you're powering through breaking waves, there's no way you can hold onto a camera and keep yourself and the camera in the boat, but I still wanted to be able to keep the shots alive rather than locking them down in a totally objective position. We needed to be a part of the action along with Tom and feel it from his perspective. To accomplish that sensation, we had to be able to operate the cameras and liven the shots up a bit to make the ride seem even bigger and more exciting than it already was."

Although the majority of cameras mounted to the skiff were Hydroflex-enclosed Arriflex 35-III's, the Millennium XL had its moment of glory during a shot in which Noland breaks through the surf and spends the next month drifting at sea. "We brought the XLs out with us when we went back to Fiji the second time, and we put them to work in a lot of situations. Pete Romano at Hydroflex had made special light-



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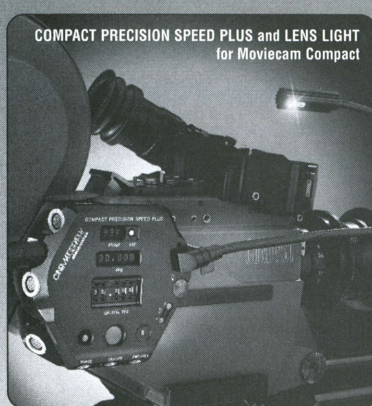
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weight bags for us, just like the ones he'd put together for John Seale [ASC, ACS] on *The Perfect Storm* [see AC July '00].

"We actually developed a fun back-and-forth dynamic with John and the guys on *The Perfect Storm*," he recalls with a smile. "After we got back from Fiji the first time to take our year-long hiatus, nearly our entire company went on to shoot *What Lies Beneath* — another picture in which water is prominently featured. At the same time, John was shooting *The Perfect Storm*, and he and his crew came to visit us to see if we were using any tricks for our water sequences that they could adapt for their own use. Together with Pete Romano, we refined the idea of the soft bags and tried out a number of different ways to keep water off of the lens. Then, when it was time to go back out for the second part of *Cast Away*, we took the refinements that John and his team had made on [their film] and went a step further.

"The XLs were really put through their paces on *Storm*, and we were excited to go back out and use them in Fiji," he continues. "We made a few adjustments. On *Storm*, the crew used compressed air to blow water off the lens, but I had a really hard time making that work, because we needed the camera to go underwater and come back up with nothing on the lens. I therefore used a spinning-disc system to keep the water off.

"Even though we were out past the breaking waves in the drifting-at-sea sequence, the waves were still pretty rough, so our biggest challenge was coming up with a stabilization system. We wound up detaching the boats for those sequences and putting the XL in a softbag on a Libra Head III system. That rig was set up in a 15-foot, rubber, motorized Avon-style raft that was then motored out into position around Tom for each of the shots.



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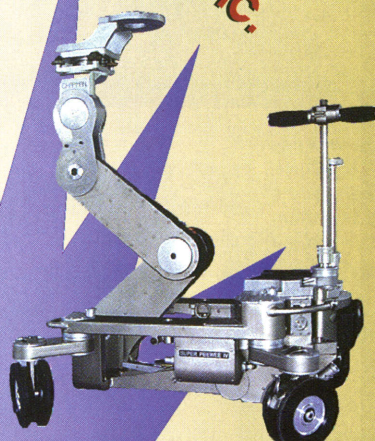
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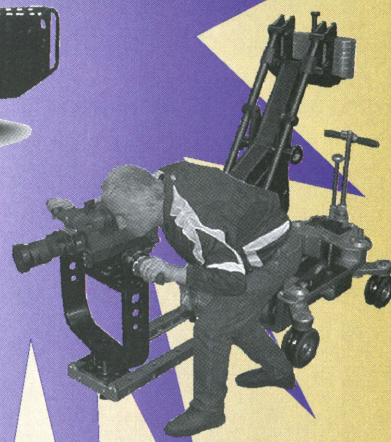
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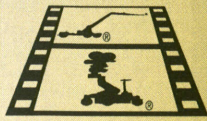
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Sole Survivor



The crew whips up some artificial waves while shooting Hanks in the soundstage.

"I can't say enough about the Libra Head III — it's an amazing system," he maintains. "We were motoring toward and away from Tom in his raft, fighting the swells

and swinging all over the place — with the boat going one way as I was spinning the [camera] wheels to keep the shot — and the images were just rock-steady. The Libra took a lot of

abuse, and it held up amazingly well. We were able to pull off some amazing, dolly-quality push-ins using this pretty compact system, and we built a fair amount of movement into those shots, so that we could move around Tom and show the audience that he's completely alone out there. We designed most of the shots so that we could find a spot with 180 degrees of clearance without any other islands in the background, but for certain shots we'll have to do a bit of 'island removal' [in post] to sell the fact that he's in the middle of nowhere. We needed to get a 360-degree perspective around him to really give the audience the sensation that he is completely alone and there is *nothing* out there."

Looking back on the project, Burgess confesses, "So much of what I do is instinctive. I'm not good at saying, 'Give me 75 footcandles of key and 14 footcandles of fill, put 18

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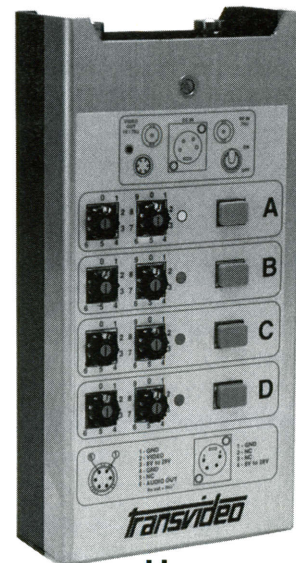
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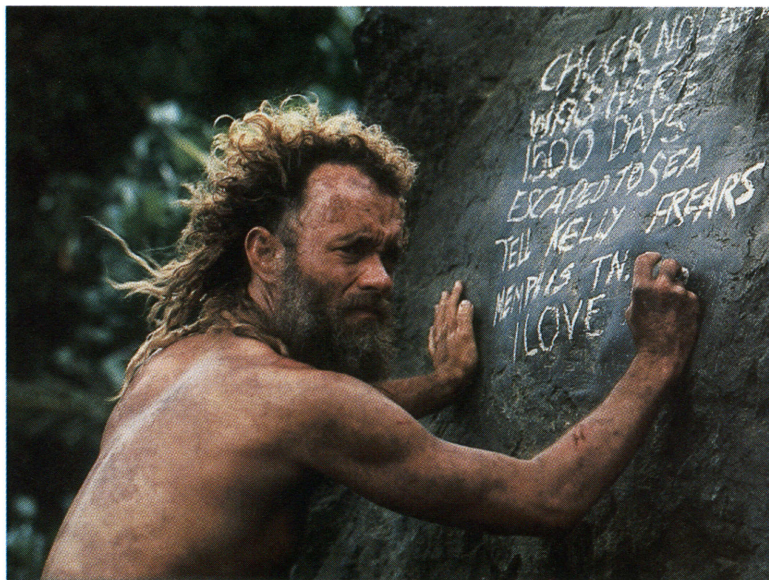
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footcandles on the walls and call me when you're ready.' What I enjoy about photography and moviemaking is the process that takes place when you shoot the scene. Once I've gotten the shot, I want to just move on, but unfortunately a big part of the job is keeping track of the continuity within individual scenes and from scene to scene. I've had a lot of situations, especially while working with Bob, where we'll be shooting a scene on location one month, and two months later we'll be shooting into the same scene on stage — which means I have to make the two setups look like one seamless location. I've found one of the best tools for doing that is the Kodak Preview system. I used to use Polaroids, and then I used video prints off the video tap, but now I shoot a digital still, load it into the Preview system, make some notes, and we're off. I'll also use the Preview as a next-generation



Noland spends four years on the island, and production on *Cast Away* shut down for a full year so Hanks could achieve the character's radical physical transformation. In addition to growing a long, scraggly beard, the actor shed nearly 60 pounds.

Polaroid to check a scene's contrast.

"So much of the cinematographer's job is about organization — it's the key to preproduction, and it's the key to surviving the production itself. The more you prepare yourself

to deal with the infinite logistical details that pop up every day, and the more answers you have before the questions come up, the more sleep you're going to get at the *end* of the day." ■

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Director of photography Peter Pau, HKSC lends a soaring, poetic grandeur to *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, a mythic and wildly romantic martial-arts epic.

by David E. Williams

Unit photography by
Chan Kam Chuen

A smash hit at the Cannes and Toronto film festivals last year, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is as wonderfully deceptive as its title suggests. Set in the 19th century, the film presents a complex romantic drama enlivened by the trappings of a Hong Kong-style, period martial-arts epic. The plot is laced with intrigue: legendary warrior Li Mu Bai (Chow Yun Fat) entrusts his jade sword, the Green Destiny, to his beloved, Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh). When the weapon is stolen by a mysterious and elusive figure, blazing action ensues as the duo attempt to recover the

relic and unveil the nefarious forces behind its theft. Meanwhile, both try to share their wisdom with Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi), a young, headstrong noblewoman who becomes entangled in the crime. Jen is torn between two desires: whether to live the *giang hu* (martial-arts life) of her mentors, or return to the arms of her true love, a long-haired bandit named Lo (Chang Chen).

Director Ang Lee has described making this \$15 million film, which was shot on location in China, as a "boyhood fantasy come true." To bring his poetic vision to life, he enlisted some of Hong Kong's

most talented artists, including director of photography Peter Pau, HKSC, whose life boasts its own share of intrigue. When he was a young man, the Hong Kong native traveled to study in Canton, China, in the mid-1960s. "My father sent me there for the discipline," Pau explains with a laugh, "but the following year, the Cultural Revolution began and I could not leave." In fact, 12 years would pass before he was able to return home. At age 27, Pau determined that filmmaking was his calling, and with his family's support, he enrolled in film school at the San Francisco Art Institute, where he

Photos courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics and Manex Visual Effects.

earned a bachelor's degree.

After returning to Hong Kong, Pau directed and photographed his first feature, *Temptation of Dance* (1984). "That gained me a lot of attention from other directors, who wanted me to work with them as a director of photography," Pau recalls. Since then, he has photographed (or co-photographed) more than two dozen pictures, including *The Greatest Lover*, *Savior of the Soul*, *The Killer*, *To Be Number One*, *Swordsman*, *Misty* (which he also directed) and *Anna Magdalena*. "I've been lucky to practice [my craft] often," Pau submits. "The Hong Kong film industry grew up with limited budgets and limited amounts of production time, so we had to learn how to work with great precision. It was good training."

Pau's work has earned him numerous accolades, including three Hong Kong Film Awards for Best Cinematography and nine more nominations. One of these prizes was for *The Bride With White Hair* (1993), an epic period fantasy concerning a noble swordsman who romances a beautiful assassin. Opulently photographed in contrasting hues, the picture was directed by Ronny Yu, with whom Pau would later work on *The Phantom Lover* and *Warriors of Virtue*. The duo would also make their Hollywood debut together with the comedic horror pic *Bride of Chucky* (see AC Oct. '98). Recently, Pau further established himself in the U.S. market by photographing *Dracula 2000*.

During his first meeting with Lee about *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, Pau asked the director to name some of the Hong Kong-style action films that had impressed him visually. "Ang told me, 'None of them,'" the cameraman recalls, laughing. "He was serious! Naturally, I became concerned, because he had never done an action movie like this before, and he also didn't have any



references from action movies that he liked." The filmmakers soon began building a visual approach of their own.

Interestingly, Pau did *not* apply his expertise with elaborate, richly colored lighting — a key device he has used on other many other action-oriented fantasy films — to *Crouching Tiger*. He explains why: "We make a lot of period action films in Hong Kong, and we generally use hard light and a full range of colors. We control them very carefully, often using extreme blacks and pure whites and mixing deep reds and blues with lots of fog and smoke effects. We also use a lot of filter effects. But that dynamic approach did not work for

Crouching Tiger, because the storytelling approach was very dramatic; using those techniques would have overdramatized the film and taken the audience out of the story and away from the characters. Instead, we wanted a look that was realistic and comfortable, so the first thing I discussed with Ang was using a low-contrast visual approach with desaturated colors."

Lee, Pau and Tim Yip, the film's production/costume designer, followed this "Chinese watercolor" aesthetic throughout the film, avoiding extreme hues and contrasts. The filmmakers also devised a subtle, three-act color scheme designed to mirror the narrative's ebbs and flows.



Opposite page: Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi) high-kicks a pair of bandits in the desert. Pau notes that the desert's rich, high-contrast look helps distinguish these scenes from the rest of the film, making Jen's memory of the setting seem more dreamlike and distant. This page, top: Jen Yu and Yu Shu Lien (Michelle Yeoh) stage a gravity-defying showdown with a variety of deadly weapons. This page, bottom: Li Mu Bai (Chow Yun Fat) finally has a grip on the mysterious thief who stole his jade sword, the Green Destiny.

High-Flying Adventure



The film's principals demonstrate their sword-fighting prowess in frames enhanced by digital artists at Manex Visual Effects in Los Angeles.

"For nearly the first half of the film, we created a normal look that was slightly more yellow and less magenta, in conjunction with a mild, cool moonlight," Pau explains. "We then made an abrupt change to a golden red-yellow for a long flashback sequence set in the desert, where we see Jen's adventures with her lover. The colors are so strong because her memories of the love she has there are the most passionate thing in her life. Finally, we infused the final third of the film with a moody green hue to dramatize the southern part of China, where some of the action takes place within a bamboo forest. The ending is a confusion of green as things become more tragic. [That effect was created] via production design and color timing."

Exceptions to these rules occur during scenes set in and around the Forbidden City, a location that generally features "vibrant reds, green greens and blue blues. We

decided to restrain the color and remove the blues, which I felt seemed too modern. We also made the reds more creamy and more like burgundy."

Pau also broke from his general approach during a scene in which two aging noblemen unsheathe the Green Destiny sword, allowing the audience to see the jade weapon for the first time. As the cool moonlight hits its ornately inscribed surface, an emerald-green glow is reflected in the men's eyes, suggesting the blade's magical power. "We did that with a small daylight-balanced Kino Flo unit that had one green-spiked tube in it," Pau says. "By just having one green tube among the blue ones, the green light was subtle enough to not be too obvious. Ang wanted the Green Destiny to have a magical quality because we needed a touch of magic, and our entire drama involves a chase around [the sword]. This effect was only done in one scene."

Abandoning his usual hard-light style, Pau used only the softest illumination on his performers. His fixtures were usually aimed through layers of Rosco 3030 full grid cloth "to get the softest light possible, particularly in scenes between Michelle Yeoh and Zhang Ziyi, because their beauty was so important to the drama in many scenes."

Also, contrary to the established aesthetics of martial-arts movies, Lee and Pau determined that *Crouching Tiger* should be framed in 2.35:1 widescreen; most films in the genre are shot in 1.85:1 in order to frame the performers' full bodies, allowing the audience the best view of the action. Lee had had a positive experience with the anamorphic format on his previous film, *Ride With the Devil* (see AC Nov. '99), and he and Pau felt that *Crouching Tiger*'s dramatic scenes, including the flashback sequence to be filmed in the China-Xinjiang Desert, would be best served in widescreen.

According to Pau, Lee adjusted his vision of the fight sequences to fit the wide frame. "While talking about the style of fighting he wanted, Ang was interested in trying to get closer to the action," the cameraman recalls. "Fight choreographers always want wider shots from high and low angles because they help sell the action, but Ang said he wanted the audience to feel as if they could join in with the action. He wanted [viewers] to be watching from an arm's length."

Pau stresses that the geography of the film's landscapes — mountains, forests and desert — was important to the drama. "While anamorphic is beautiful in wide shots, as soon as you move into medium shots or close-ups, the scenery and environment disappear because of the lack of depth of field. Only Super 35 could give us both the wide frame and the depth we needed for the geography as well as the fight scenes, because it would have been difficult to carry the focus for many



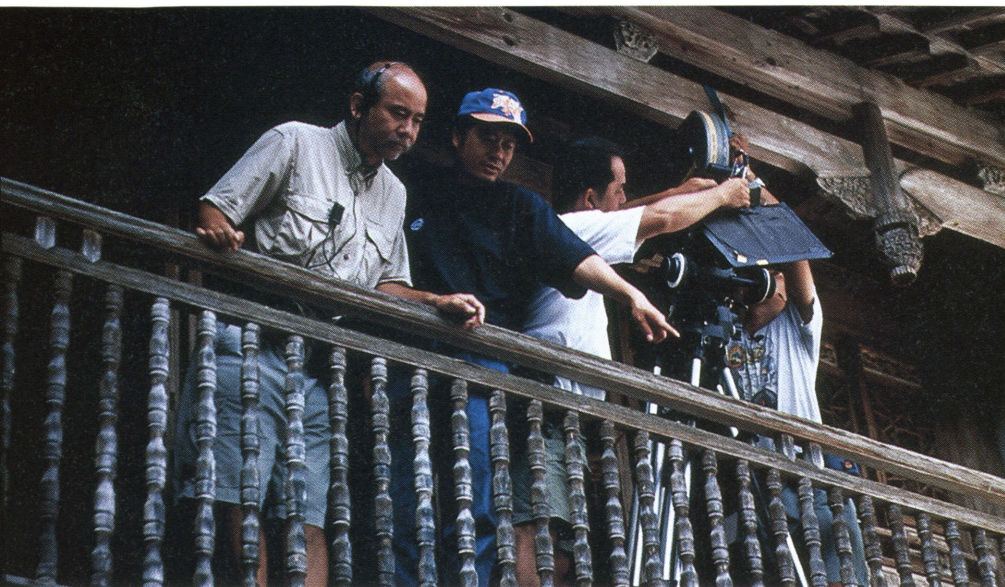
BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY

Peter Pau

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON

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High-Flying Adventure



Above: Cinematographer Peter Pau (left) and director Ang Lee set up an elaborately staged brawl on a set built within the Beijing Film Studios. Below right: In a shot from the brawl scene, Jen Yu prepares to humiliate an entire gang of male warriors.

of them, especially since most take place at night.”

To soften the picture’s overall palette, Pau selected Kodak Vision 320T 5277 as his primary film stock. “I rated it at 250 ASA, giving it a slight overexposure in order to be on the safe side when we did our Super 35 blowup,” he explains. “I didn’t want the grain to be too pronounced. Continuing with that idea, we shot our daylight scenes with 50 ASA EXR 5245, which has the finest grain possible and can capture extreme details — that quality was useful for our desert sequences. If we were dealing with low light or shadow conditions, we used Vision 250D 5246 in conjunction with the 5245.” To increase his depth of field, Pau tried to shoot everything at a stop of at least T4, which demanded a considerable amount of light because he was working with slow- and medium-speed stocks.

All of the footage was processed normally in the lab — Technicolor New York — since “pushing means adding grain and contrast,” Pau notes. The cinematographer chose Technicolor because he wanted to do the film’s post work in New York and had enjoyed a great experience with the company’s Rome branch while shooting the

action film *Double Team* in Italy. “Unfortunately, I was unable to visit Technicolor in New York before we began shooting. I just did a preliminary test in Hong Kong, we discussed what I was looking for, I sent footage to them for processing, and everything seemed okay. But when we got our first dailies, they were all wrong — green, yellow, warm and daylight-feeling. I called and told them I wanted the look to be much cooler, but the situation never quite worked out.”

Pau had only used Super 35 once before. “Of course, the blowup is critical, and I’ve seen no better Super 35 work than that in James Cameron’s films,” he says. “We had CFI in Los Angeles do our blowup because of their work on *Titanic* [see

AC Dec. ’97]. They do a fantastic job of retaining sharpness and not losing details. The flesh tones remained accurate, but you still lose about 10 percent of your color saturation due to the optical Super 35 blowup, which is why I see using a digital blowup as being the future of the format.” (Pau did some tests with this process by shooting in Super 35, scanning the footage and recording out an anamorphic negative with favorable results, but he had neither the time nor the budget to pursue it.)

While the combatants in *Crouching Tiger* demonstrate an array of fighting techniques in diverse locations, a few ground rules had to be laid out before shooting began. “We had to determine what kind of combat we would be using — fighting with flying stunts or just fistfighting,” Pau recalls. “Ang wanted flying; he dreamed of it. That approach requires a tremendous amount of wire work, and in classical Hong Kong films, we traditionally use smoke effects and hard light for those kinds of scenes to help us hide the wires. But those techniques weren’t right for *Crouching Tiger*, so we instead relied upon digital wire removal.”

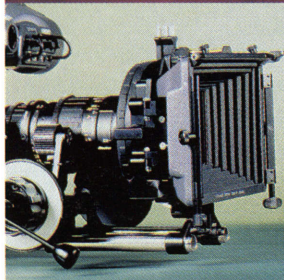
To Hollywood veterans, this might sound like a standard solution, but *Crouching Tiger* was not a Hollywood film, and the production’s tight budget at first seemed to prohibit such an easy out. Fortunately, though, Pau’s plan of



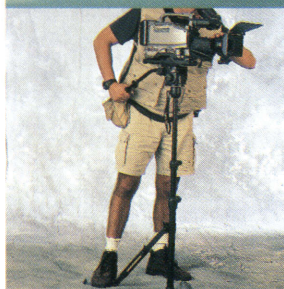
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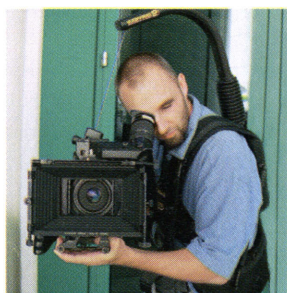
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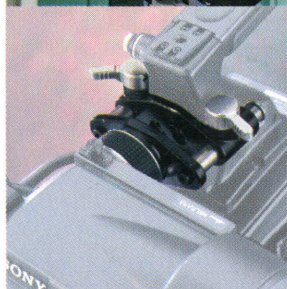
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High-Flying Adventure

staying true to the film's style — along with a few favors and the generosity of those who appreciated the film's merits — helped the filmmakers accomplish their goals.

Lee had little experience with visual-effects work, but Pau had gained some while shooting *Double Team*, *Warriors of Virtue* and *Bride of Chucky*, and through his own experiments with the digital retouching and enhancement of still photographs. Since the production didn't have the budget to hire a visual-effects supervisor, the cameraman took on those duties throughout the shoot and during postproduction. Pau explains, "Most of our digital work

scorching 100°F sands of the China-Xinjiang desert. In flashback scenes shot there, Jen first meets Lo, the leader of an outlaw band that attacks the caravan which is taking her family to Beijing. The tempestuous girl chases Lo on horseback, and the duo eventually fall in love. Pau's 18-member crew from Hong Kong — which included Pau's longtime gaffer, Lee Tak Shing, along with focus puller Kenny Lam, camera team operator Louis Jong, crane operator Jimmy Fok, best boy Shuan Ching Chuen, second-unit cameraman Choi Sung Fai and second-unit gaffer Lam Chun Wan — worked in the "English" crew system, with Pau

armed with unique bladed weapons as well, and all slash and stab furiously until Li Mu Bai arrives on the scene. His spectacular entry — a fantastic descent from a towering tree — has him literally flying into the fray. "Our biggest problem was that many of our action sequences took place at night in large exterior spaces," Pau offers. "The graveyard scene was perhaps the most difficult. We'd scheduled it for eight shooting days, but it went on for about 16."

The most time-consuming aspect of these preparations involved rigging the intricate wire-work stunts devised for the film by legendary action choreographer Yuen Wo-Ping, who earned well-deserved fame with his extensive work on *The Matrix*. The trickiness of these setups was compounded by Lee's unwillingness to predetermine how the fights should be photographed; he preferred to tackle them with an organic, shot-by-shot approach. "Wo-Ping certainly knows how to do his work," Pau asserts, "but each shot could sometimes take a very long time to set up. While Ang's approach was good in *theory*, it could then take ages and *ages* to get things done. When you are doing this kind of work, you should let people know exactly what you want in advance so they can prepare."

Pau had worked with Chow on three previous films, but the performer had never done wire work before, which further complicated the graveyard scene: "This was his first night on the shoot, and our first shot was to be his leap, in which he flies down about 20 feet while flinging the sheath from his sword. Ang had him do it 18 times. Each take was a meticulous refinement of the performance, designed to help Chow deliver the tempo and drama Ang sought."

Whereas most films featuring such difficult-to-replicate action would generally be shot with many cameras running simultaneously



A drenched and exhausted Jen Yu leans on the Green Destiny for support.

was done by my friend Leo Lo at Asia Cine Digital, which has one of the only Kodak Cineon scanners in Hong Kong. Leo did more than 300 shots, which included wire-rig removal and sky replacements. I supervised the work, which also included a lot of color-correction."

To fulfill the film's more ambitious effects needs, Pau steered the production to Manex L.A., the Los Angeles branch of the Oscar-winning house that was largely responsible for the groundbreaking effects seen in *The Matrix*. "They were excited about the project and did about 60 shots for us on an incredibly small budget," Pau says. (See sidebar on page 64.)

The five-month *Crouching Tiger* shoot began in August 1999, with two weeks of work in the

operating the A-camera himself. Virtually all of their camera, grip and electrical gear was supplied by Salon Films, Ltd. of Hong Kong.

The cinematographer explains that the film's desert exteriors were handled normally, with the crew using reflectors and bounce cards to help control the harsh sunlight. He notes, however, that the desert's rich, high-contrast look helps distinguish it from the rest of the film's scenes, making Jen's memory of the setting seem more dreamlike and distant.

In one of the first major fight scenes tackled by the *Crouching Tiger* crew on location in Beijing, two men face off with the hooded thief in a dark graveyard. The villain wields the Green Destiny, and the sword empowers him with miraculous abilities. The other combatants are

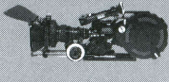
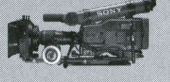
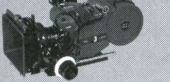
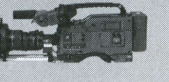
from various angles, Pau carried only two units on *Crouching Tiger*: a Moviecam Compact as his A-camera and an Arri 435ES for high-speed and visual-effects work, both fitted with Zeiss prime lenses.

This two-camera limit was imposed as much for budgetary reasons as it was for the choreography, which was generally designed to work from only one angle. In addition, Lee's quest to place the camera within the action often negated the possibility of using multiple units, while demanding complex interaction between the camera and the performers. This compelled Pau to cover much of his action with his Power Pod rig, because "handheld work wasn't steady enough. This film is about gracefulness, so we instead worked out this sort of *tai chi* dance between the camera and the actors, allowing us to move around them and search for details within the fights."

While no dedicated lighting was used to highlight the bladed weapons used throughout the scene, Pau notes that "the big soft sources we were using worked well to create dramatic reflections; if we hit the angle of the source and kicked it into the lens, the entire blade would shine. I had used this technique a lot on *The Bride With White Hair* to enhance the sword fights in that film."

The lessons that the crew learned while filming the graveyard battle were put to the test during production of the film's first jaw-dropping action sequence, in which Yu Shu Lien attempts to chase down the thief who has stolen the Green Destiny. Beginning in the streets and alleys outside the Forbidden City, the moonlit pursuit suddenly takes a turn into the fantastic when the thief defies gravity and leaps up to run across a building's rooftop. Yu Shu Lien follows, and the adversaries are soon springing from roof to roof, with their feet covering yards with each step. Throughout much of the




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High-Flying Adventure

Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi) and the long-haired bandit Lo (Chang Chen) consummate their passion in the outlaw's desert hideout.



chase, the camera seemingly flies over the action, trailing the two figures from above as they bound across the city. “Ang explained that he wanted a poetic, balletic tone for that scene,” Pau recalls. “He had a dream of the camera flying over the action, seeing the two people like fish swimming through water.”

The extraordinary chase was done entirely with wires after digital techniques proved too expensive. The camera was flown very close to the two performers with the use of a 34' crane/Power Pod combination mounted atop a 10' platform, which gave Pau exceptional flexibility to float over the 12'-high rooftops and still give the actors plenty of clearance under the lens. The duo were then suspended from a much taller construction crane that “flew” the pair over the cityscape in a wide arc while Pau and his camera gave chase.

“To shoot the sequence, we had to light up almost one square mile of the city,” Pau reports, smiling with disbelief. “We had two industrial cranes, each supporting two 18Ks, and another crane equipped with a 12K. Our lighting had to allow us to backlight the action from two directions because we didn’t know exactly where we’d be going. It was such a large area to cover, especially with a single-source moonlight

effect. We could only pre-plan very small sections of the action, one day at a time. It was frustrating!”

Undercranking the camera in such scenes was important not only to add apparent speed, but also extra drama. “My experience with action movies told me that we not only had to cover scenes at various speeds, but [we also had] to do speed changes within certain shots to accentuate the emotion of specific movements,” Pau offers. “Human beings cannot make the kinds of movements that would often look best. In this scene, for example, the two performers were trying to make long strides across the rooftops, but they could not physically make the steps fast enough. Therefore, we often did manual speed changes between each step to quicken their movements, enhancing the action without it feeling obvious.”

For these types of scenes, Pau also experimented with digital speed changes in post. After dropping frames, he created mini-morphs between the remaining images to alleviate any resulting jerkiness. “That adds just a bit of motion blur, which makes the effect work. But if you are designing a shot for a digital speed change, it’s also important to shoot it at the slowest frame rate at which your subject should appear — 50 fps, 100 fps, whatever is necessary.

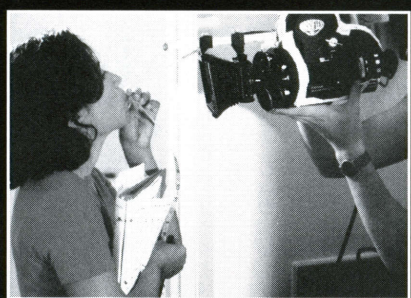
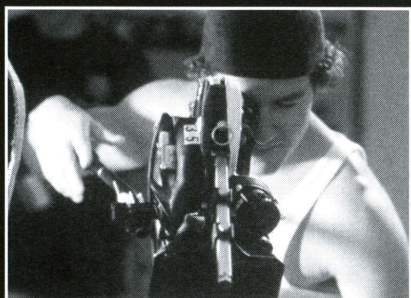
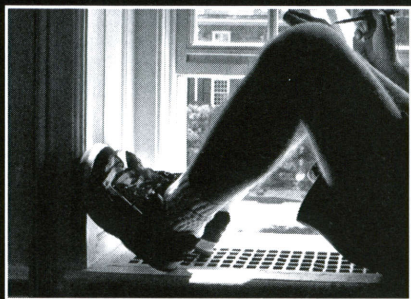
You can always speed the action by skipping whatever you do not want, but it’s difficult to slow action down without extensive effects work.” Because of Pau’s need to employ alternating camera speeds, the use of flicker-free lighting was essential. He also needed the ability to easily augment his lighting to work at anywhere from 21 fps to 100 fps.

Some of the film’s most lyrical action occurs within the bamboo forest — or, more accurately, on the very tips of the bamboo trees. As the drama unfolds, Li Mu Bai challenges Jen Yu to give up her illegitimate ways and become his pupil, while chasing her into the towering forest. Finally, the pair face off and trade blows while balancing on a bowed bamboo stalk some 100' off the ground. Lee wanted the scene to have a cloudy, mystical feel, but the production encountered varying weather — cloudy, sunny and rainy — throughout this 12-day portion of the shoot. Shooting proceeded, with Chow and Ziyi securely wired to help them perform their high-flying feats, while Pau and his crew again relied on their crane/Power Pod assembly, this time with the rig mounted to the top of an industrial crane.

“Ang explained this scene in terms of the relationship growing between Li Mu Bai and Jen,” Pau says. “He has feelings for the girl but is holding them back. He chases her into the bamboo, hiding within the leaves and then revealing himself. At the same time, she is confused because she cannot decide if she trusts him.

“Well, this theory of the drama was interesting, but we then had to figure out what we were going to shoot for the next 12 days!” Pau continues. “There was no description of the action in the script! As we shot, though, the scene became something else: a demonstration of Mu Bai’s composure, his *coolness* as the girl tries to fight him. That quality comes

Continued on page 66



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Top: Jen Yu and Li Mu Bai skip across a pool of water. The sequence was achieved by blending two shots: the top portion with the actors descending from the treetops, followed by a shot of the pair skipping across the water. Bottom: Throughout the production, wire-work master Yuen Wo-Ping and his crew strung up the actors on a number of intricate rigs.



HIGH-WIRE ACT

by Ron Magid

Arguably the most ambitious and personal work yet from director Ang Lee, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* is also a rip-roaring kung fu action movie that features spectacular fight choreography staged by the acknowledged master of wire work, Yuen Wo-Ping (*The Matrix*). Some of the film's dazzling visual effects, including some digitally augmented stunts and several CG matte paintings that effectively transport audiences to early 19th-century China, were supervised by Rob Hodgson of Manex L.A. (formerly Computer Film Company). Hodgson, whose credits include *The Devil's Advocate* and *American Beauty*, created a modest 60 shots, while an additional 300 wire-removals were handled by Asia Cine.

In expanding the film's period realm, Hodgson's challenge was to blend matte paintings with the natural harmony of China's unspoiled scenery, and to bring 1800s Beijing — with its Forbidden

City and red-tiled rooftops — to bustling life. Hodgson says that Lee wanted to present the setting from a unique angle. "Ang had seen a shot in a contemporary book of helicopter views of Beijing, and he said that it was the angle and height he wanted," Hodgson recalls. "[From] that height, you've already got a strike against you because reality itself looks like a miniature — you're not used to seeing things so large from that high."

Hodgson was surprised and thrilled to discover a 1/15 scale model of Beijing within a tourist attraction just outside the city. "We couldn't believe our luck!" he says. "I thought, 'Okay, that shot's done,' but it ended up being a tougher job than we expected. Unfortunately, the model [had been] built about 10 years ago, and all of the shrubbery had grown up. When we went up in a small crane to shoot stills of the model from the correct angle for the shot, [we found that] bushes and trees obscured most of the buildings. In addition, the model had tourist walkways that were 15 times too wide.

"Still, it gave us a very good starting point; we shot 20 rolls of stills of the miniature from different angles. We then had to shoot other buildings from other angles all over the miniature and paste our matte painting together from that."

Hodgson says he accumulated a sizable library of photographs of Beijing that dated back to the early 1900s, as well as some illustrations that were even older. "We matched

the painting to those images, even shooting photos from areas in Beijing that still had 200-year-old houses," he explains. "We literally shot down from the highest building we could find onto those rooftops, and then integrated them into our painting. One of the biggest challenges was getting the correct perspective and having the least amount of lens distortion in the stills, so our painting wouldn't have a wide-angle feel — even though it was such a wide shot. It took a fair amount of work to equalize the [lens disparity] that we'd get from shooting small pieces and then stitching them all together into a large painting."

However, Hodgson says that his greatest challenge was to convincingly populate 19th-century Beijing with countless pedestrians and passenger-laden wagons. "The shot was so wide that we were afraid [that viewers] would barely perceive the people, so we actually made the people just a touch too big and kept them almost in silhouette," he reveals. "Your eye doesn't want too much crispness, because it can't cope with all of that reality. To create the traffic on the bridge behind the Forbidden City, we shot 400 extras, plus camels, sheep and horses, from a crane on a roadway we built just outside Beijing. Unfortunately, the bridge itself needed to be three times the width of our set, so we effectively had to clone three different takes of those people to make the road three times [wider]. We also isolated some people elements and dotted them around other parts of the matte painting. That was the key."

Just before Hodgson left Beijing, Lee threw him a curveball: he wanted to change a shot of the city at night. "We had previously discussed it as being a very simple shot — we'd just do a day-for-night gag on some of the shots of the miniature. But Ang was very specific about what he wanted to see in the matte painting: two very large buildings, the Bell

Tower and the Drum Tower, with the Forbidden City in the background,” Hodgson says. “None of the stills we used on the shot were actually taken for that shot. We had to adapt stills that I took of the miniature city for our daytime matte painting, using those to put together the nighttime matte painting. We were fortunate that we had coverage of everything so we could piece it together!”

“The other challenge was that the shot was supposed to be set at 3 a.m., when absolutely nothing is happening,” he continues. “I wanted to add some movement to break up the static areas of the shot, which was demonstrated so well with the matte paintings and flocks of birds in *Gladiator* [see *AC* May ’00]. In our shot, everyone’s asleep and there are no lights because there’s no electricity! But then I realized [that we could work with] candlelight, so we added some flickers in the windows.”

Beyond reinventing 19th-century Beijing, a good deal of Hodgson’s contribution consisted of some extraordinary editorial work, which blends the visual effects so seamlessly with Yuen’s wirework that the stitching is virtually imperceptible. Yuen devised gigantic wire rigs to fly stars Michelle Yeoh, Chow Yun Fat and Zhang Ziyi up onto walls, over rooftops and through trees with supernatural grace. “None of that was digital,” Hodgson marvels. “They just had wires stringing across the rooftops or whatever, and eight guys on one end with block-and-tackle, running as hard as they could! A lot of the fight sequences were shot marginally overcranked, and [cinematographer] Peter Pau and Ang were tweaking that all the time. They tried different frame rates to see which looked better, and it was literally the difference between 21 and 22 frames per second. At 21 fps, you could just spot that it was running too fast, but 22 fps looked fantastic. The first time I saw those shots, I couldn’t believe how fast those guys

were moving!”

One standout sequence involves a chase over land and water as Li Mu Bai (Chow) pursues Jen Yu (Ziyi) through a lush grove of trees as she magically skips across a much larger lake and lands gracefully on a rock. Hodgson notes, “Ang had always wanted that to be one shot, but it was actually done by blending two shots into one: the top section where the characters come down through the trees, followed by [a shot of them] skipping across the water.

Although Yuen’s team managed to string an incredibly complex wire rig at the location to fly Chow and Ziyi’s stunt doubles, the live-action shots lacked the effortless grace that Lee demanded. “In the end, we blended five different takes of them coming across the water,” Hodgson says. “It was very tricky, because Zhang’s double was attempting to skip across the water — getting her feet wet in the process — and then hit the rocks at high speed. She couldn’t keep her footing on the rocks because they’d been watered down for photographic reasons, so we shot the two doubles separately and combined them in post. In the end, we digitally lifted Zhang’s double out of the water because she was going too deep, and we replaced the splashes so it looked as if she was tiptoeing across the lake. The take we had of Chow’s double flying and landing was perfect; later on, though, the cut determined that he needed to be facing her when he landed, so we replaced it with another landing from another pass. We just had to hope that the sequences would blend well with Yuen’s unmanipulated choreography.” ■

Eight



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through very well in the finished sequence. This approach was to Ang's credit, because while Chow is not an expert swordsman, he is *very* good at being cool. This sense of composure allows him to defeat the girl easily and convincingly [without needing to demonstrate any technical expertise]."

Though some of the scene's close-ups could be accomplished under more controlled circumstances, atop a special platform dressed with bamboo, the changing weather caused the contrast levels to fluctuate wildly from shot to shot. This required Pau to spend extensive time on the sequence at Asia Cine Digital, doing shot-by-shot digital color timing and contrast correction. "Success does not come from heaven," he offers. "You have to struggle in order to be good."

The final two months of the *Crouching Tiger* shoot took place at the Beijing Film Studios, where all

interiors and some exteriors were handled. One of Pau's subtlest lighting efforts there was the creation of a stately home and courtyard, where Li Mu Bai and Yu Shu Lien meet after the theft of the Green Destiny. As they obliquely discuss their feelings for each other, a strong sense of unrequited love bubbles to the surface. To begin creating the daylight look needed for the scene, Pau had the crew hang 80 custom 5K lanterns evenly over the set to provide an overall ambience. (He had originally built the lanterns, each of which contains 10 500-watt bulbs, while shooting *Warriors of Virtue* at the studio in 1996.) The cinematographer then used a total of 20 10Ks and 5Ks for interior fill within the massive estate, and employed two 16K Maxi-Brute-type fixtures fitted with narrow-spot bulbs to create punchy daylight shafts. This gave Pau his desired stop of T4 while using

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"The framing of these dramatic scenes and others is quite different from the action scenes," Pau points out. "We use a lot of negative space, which relates back to the Chinese-watercolor look we sought. We also use long takes shot with a static camera, which allows the audience to focus on the dialogue and the subtle emotions of the characters — and also to rest a bit after the martial-arts scenes! The lighting went along with this idea, in that we didn't want to use too many sources or to make it too complex. [We wanted the lighting to] be pleasing to the eye and almost relaxing, which makes those scenes unlike any others I've done."

In order to meet last year's deadline for Cannes, Pau and Lee had to curtail their timing sessions at Technicolor New York, and neither filmmaker was happy with the result — though the film was a tremendous

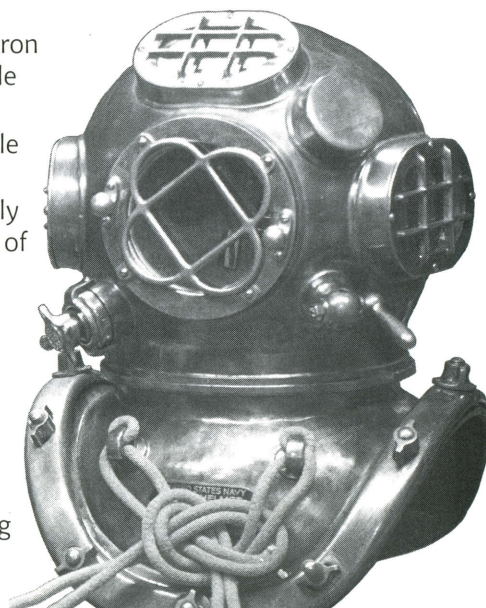
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success with audiences. Another person unhappy with the Cannes print was Tom Bernard, the president of Sony Pictures Classics (SPC), which is the film's U.S. distributor. According to Pau, SPC insisted that the film should be completely retimed, and worked to involve Pau in that process. Toward that end, the *Crouching Tiger* anamorphic internegative created at CFI was sent to Deluxe Laboratories in Toronto, where Pau was finishing *Dracula 2000*. "I was happy with what Deluxe was doing for me there, and my color timer, Leslie D'Brass, and I spent two weeks working on [*Crouching Tiger*] to improve the color and the black densities," Pau relates. "When we were on our fifth print, Tom Bernard arrived to see for himself what we had accomplished, and he was happy. I'm just thankful that we had this second chance to work on the film."



Jen Yu and Lo gaze out upon a spectacular Chinese vista.

Pau adds that because the blowup done at CFI left the blacks a bit thin, his timing was optimized to be printed on Kodak's Vision Premiere stock. "That held the blacks very well," the cinematographer says. "It's a clean black, and you can still

see details. Because this film will only be on about 800 screens, Sony is trying to have every print made on that stock. They want the picture to look good, and I certainly appreciate that." ■

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Enter the Dragon



In making the period martial-arts romance *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, director Ang Lee realizes a boyhood dream.

by David E. Williams

Unit photography
by Chan Kam Chuen

Few modern filmmakers have mastered the use of characters and story as fully as writer/director Ang Lee. Over the course of just seven feature films, he has established himself as a cinematic chameleon capable of exploring widely varied time periods and social structures to create dramas of substance.

Born and raised in Taiwan, Lee moved to the United States in 1978 to attend the University of Illinois,

where he received a bachelor's degree in theater. He later earned an master's degree in film from New York University. In 1992, he directed his first feature, *Pushing Hands*, which began a fruitful collaboration with screenwriter/producer James Schamus that continues to this day.

Pushing Hands, which focuses on the familial bonds of a Chinese family living in Manhattan, became the first film in Lee's "Father Knows Best Trilogy," along with *The Wedding Banquet* (1993) and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994, see AC Jan. '95). Each picture illustrates the strained roles of love, family and tradition within modern Asian society, and each earned critical kudos for the director.

Despite these successes with dramatic storytelling, Lee surprised some filmgoers with *Sense and Sensibility*, the 1995 adaptation of Jane Austen's classic tale of a love that's nearly thwarted by social mores. The film's fresh spirit — fostered in no small part by Michael Coulter, BSC's Oscar-nominated cinematography (see AC June '96) — found favor with audiences. In 1996, Lee again changed course with *The Ice Storm* (see AC Oct. '97), his first

Photos courtesy of Sony Pictures Classic.

feature on an entirely American subject: family values (or the lack thereof) in the bleak, bourgeois landscape of 1970s America. Unfortunately, the subtle brilliance of this picture, which featured stark, moody camerawork by Frederick Elmes, ASC, was lost on many.

Lee returned in 1999 with the Civil War-era Western *Ride With the Devil*. Shot in widescreen anamorphic by Elmes (see AC Nov. '99), this picture once again illustrated the director's ability to weave complex characters through a compelling drama.

Now, in another move that confounds convention, Lee has returned with *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, an astonishing take on the martial-arts genre that won critical and popular raves during its debut at last year's Cannes Film Festival.

AC spoke to Lee before and after the premiere of *Crouching Tiger* at Cannes, and the conversations ranged from the specifics of making the movie in China to his boyhood love of bone-crunching kung fu films.

American Cinematographer:
How were you introduced to the book upon which *Crouching Tiger* is based?

Ang Lee: I'm an admirer of the novelist, Wang Du Lu, who wrote a lot of martial-arts fiction — which was very popular when I was growing up in Taiwan. Most of this genre is pulp fiction, but *Crouching Tiger* was something else: even though the characters could fly, [the story] was grounded in reality. Usually, the female characters [in such tales] are very passive; here the main woman was very active and very rebellious. That made it very interesting.

This novel was written just before World War II, and about five years ago a good friend of mine brought it to my attention. I've been wanting to make the film since then.

After *The Ice Storm*, I decided that after making three films in English, I had to make a Chinese film. This story had stayed with me over the years, and I had wanted to make a martial-arts film since boyhood.

Can you elaborate on the story and how its focus on female characters makes it different?

Lee: The martial-arts genre is traditionally very macho, but [this film has] two very important female leads, played by Michelle Yeoh and Zhang Ziyi. They are the anchors of the movie, and although other martial-arts films have strong female characters, they are not usually the focus of the story. Whether this is because of the material, the filmmakers or the intended

film won't be as broad as it could have been [if it were in English], but we wanted to keep the fantasy elements working, so perhaps the foreign language will work better for some viewers. There are people flying through the air and doing all kinds of stunts, and maybe audiences will accept those things better.

I know that the writing of this script was a complicated process. The story for the film is just one segment of the novel; in addition, one of the screenwriters, James Schamus, who also produced the film, doesn't read Chinese, and there is no English translation of the novel.

Lee: James has worked on all of my films since *The Wedding*



audience, I don't know.

What were some of the reasons for making the film in the Mandarin language?

Lee: Well, this was my boyhood fantasy and a piece of martial-arts fiction, so I had to make it a Chinese-language film. I just didn't know how it would look and sound to me if it were in English — for me, that would be like seeing John Wayne speaking Chinese in a Western! Maybe the market for the

Banquet, so we're pals and fellow filmmakers — I never treat him like [just] a screenwriter! In this case, when we were raising money, he did the first draft of the script, basing his work on a scenario that I had written from the novel, which is very long. Hui-Ling Wang, who worked with us on *Eat Drink Man Woman*, did the second draft, and he was pretty much starting from scratch because he was writing in Chinese. We went back and forth on that a few times, with

Opposite page: Lee says that he's dreamed of making a martial-arts film. **This page:** Wire-work master Yuen Wo-Ping (left) confers with Lee on the set.

Enter the Dragon

Li Mu Bai (Chow Yun Fat) tries to impart some of his considerable wisdom to young Jen Yu (Zhang Ziyi).



me as the “in between” person. There were a lot of other challenges on this film, such as trying to bring high drama to what is essentially a B-movie action story, as well as bringing Hollywood production standards to a Chinese film made in China.

What type of working relationship did you have with your cinematographer, Peter Pau, who has extensive experience in making martial-arts fantasy films? Did he help you to capture the authentic flavor you were after?

Lee: Peter is probably the biggest and most Hollywood-like cinematographer in all of Hong Kong. In fact, he’s probably more Hollywood in style than Fred Elmes [ASC], who shot my last two films, *The Ice Storm* and *Ride With the Devil*. Peter has made several big martial-arts films, such as *The Bride With White Hair*, [as well as] some very artistic films. He’s also done a lot of action work, and he’s made some films in Hollywood. He brought the

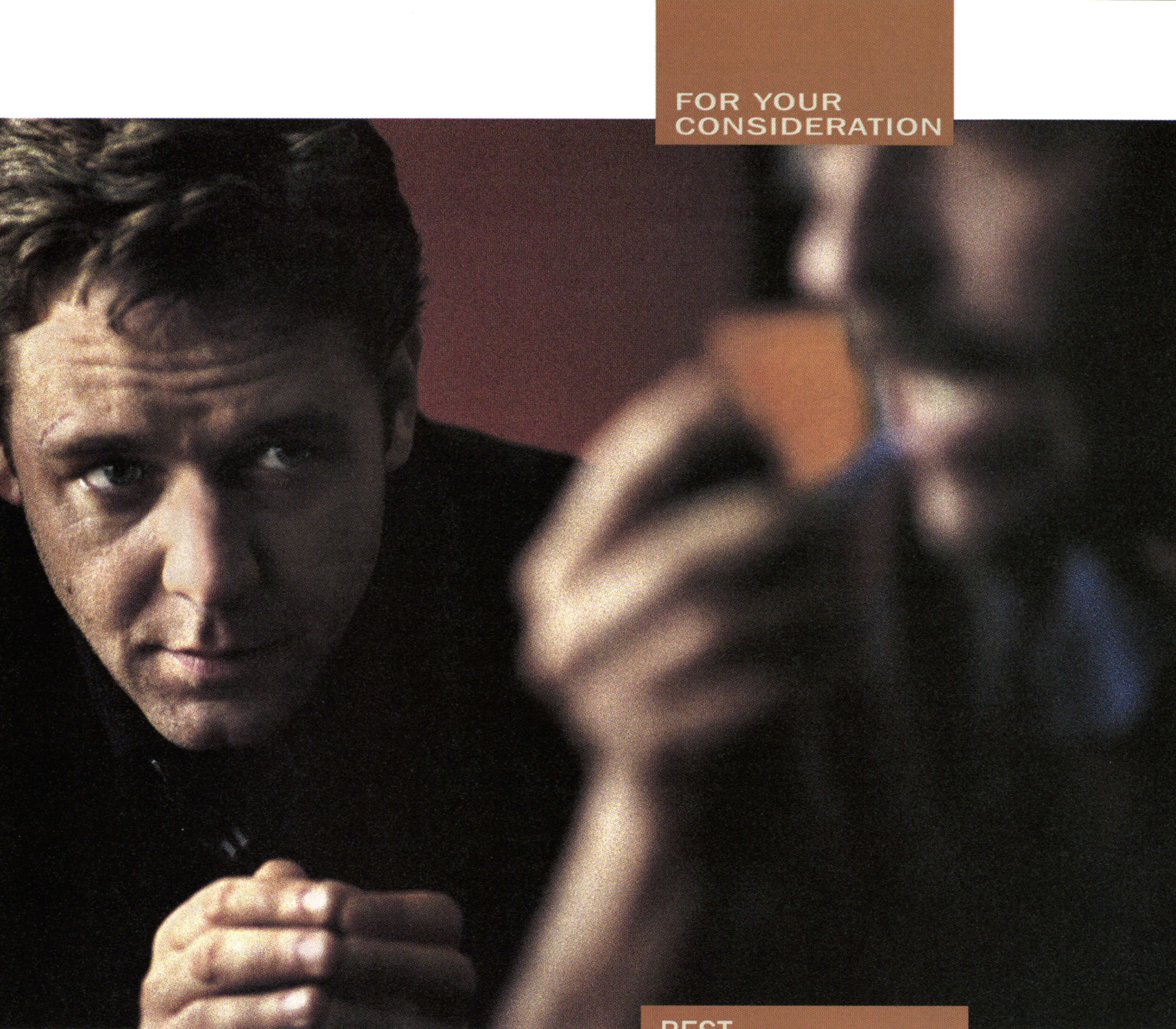
best crew with him, he operated the camera, and he worked with us on the budget by helping us get the equipment we needed for five months — Peter means a lot to the rental houses in Hong Kong! He has directed films, and he even served as our assistant director — he’s probably one of the few cinematographers in the world who can do all of that. What else can I say?

Peter and [stunt coordinator] Yuen Wo-Ping know the genre very well, so they didn’t get in each other’s way. They were a dream Hong Kong team. If scenes involved action — even the biggest, most expensive-looking shots — things had to go Mr. Yuen’s way, because the shots had to work together. Peter had to work with that, and I can’t think of a Hollywood cinematographer who would have that kind of patience. Because each shot had to be worked out, we were working in a sort of student-filmmaking or guerrilla-filmmaking style, but we had to

make it great! We would sometimes set up the stunt or wire work only to find that the angle we wanted to use simply wouldn’t work; we’d have to choose a new one, and Peter couldn’t do his lighting until that was all set.

Peter was sometimes frustrated by our shooting style for the action scenes, because he wanted to make shots look so beautiful, but we didn’t have those sequences planned in time for him to get the lighting exactly the way he wanted it. But for the dramatic scenes, Peter had the time he wanted, and he gave those shots a very artistic, refined look — it’s very rich and classic, almost Hollywood in style. One of the tools that really helped us was the Power Pod crane arm. It gave us a lot of flexibility, and while it’s generally used for very slow, smooth movements in Hollywood, the Hong Kong operators make it zoom everywhere, which is part of the genre’s visual language.

Most Hong Kong action films utilize a very contrasty light-



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ing scheme and extremes in color temperature, but you went for a much more subdued look on this film.

Lee: Yes, we chose to recreate the look of classic Chinese watercolor paintings, so we used low-contrast film stock and also built that into the production design and lighting. It's semi-realistic, semi-abstract. But it is a Chinese aesthetic, and there's an

in society — that is, people hidden beneath the surface of regulations and social codes. There is mystery, and things pop up unexpectedly. But later, that theme becomes more psychological and concerns hidden desires, so I thought it would feel right for the color to flatten out and become simpler. The fantasy aspect is more pronounced at night and later in the film.

some theaters, especially in Asia, they would [not remove the 1.85 matte] in the projector and probably chop off a lot of heads! So then I thought about 1.85, until we did our location scout in the Gobi Desert; I knew we had to shoot those landscapes in widescreen. For a fight between two people, especially if they are using weapons, I think widescreen works well, but not for leaping action. Of

Jen Yu finds herself surrounded by outlaws after her caravan is raided in the desert.



old saying: "It's between like and unlike. Realism and fantasy." And that's where you want to be when you're trying to create art — realistic to bring people in emotionally, and fantastic to spark the imagination. To get there, we reduced the contrast in the film and used just the mid-tones. We took out blue for the most part, and we often went with a monotone palette, especially at night. It becomes more and more fantastic as the film goes on.

For me, the first half deals with the 'crouching tiger, hidden dragon'

I'm surprised that you went with a 2.35:1 widescreen frame, because it seems that 1.85:1 would serve the fight scenes better by allowing you to get full body shots while remaining relatively close to the action.

Lee: I initially wanted to use a 1.66:1 or even 1.33:1 frame, because there is a lot of leaping action in the film and I thought the height of the frame would work well. We also have a lot of mountainous landscapes at the end of the film, so I was thinking of an Academy frame. Of course, at

course, you can do less up-and-down action and compose action that is more diagonal. You have to work within the frame, so we were at a disadvantage in some scenes.

Another decision was to shoot in the Super 35 format. Fred Elmes and I had used anamorphic on *Ride With the Devil*, which also had a lot of action, and while I thought that it was great for an epic look and for composition, the depth of field was much too shallow for what we needed on *Crouching Tiger* — [anamorphic] would have been too

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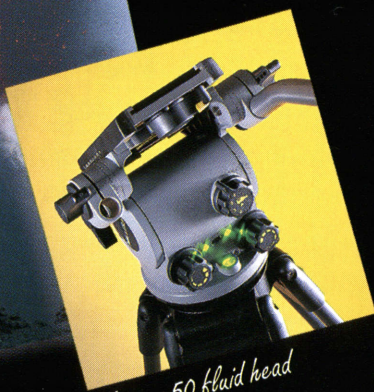
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Enter the Dragon

Director of photography Peter Pau (left) and Lee seem to agree on their next point of attack.



constricting on the performers. Anamorphic is a better tool for the widescreen look and composition, but not for this film. Of course, with Super 35, we did lose a bit of image quality with the blowup.

What did you do differently in the desert scenes in terms of colors or compositions?

Lee: We used a lot of red to symbolize the passion between our two characters. This was the one portion of the film where the tiger and dragon were not hidden, though we reintroduced red at the end of the film in the cave scene to suggest that feelings were being revealed there as well. The desert also gave us a lot of yellows. However, there were a lot of questions about shooting those scenes at all, in that they [comprised] a very long flashback. In cinema language, the flashback has been out of date for 40 years, but because this is a martial-arts fantasy film with a B-movie nature, I thought there was an excuse for doing it so bluntly. When we return to the present-day portion of the film, it's dominated by greens — suggesting the Jade Fox and the Green Destiny — and misty whites.

How did you select Yuen Wo-Ping as your action coordinator?

Lee: Yuen Wo-Ping has been an idol of mine for many years. He's been directing films since I was in high school, and he even directed

Jackie Chan's breakthrough films [1978's *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow* and 1979's *Drunken Master*]. He therefore has the experience; he's a better action director than I am, although I think I'm a better dramatic director! So it was a collaboration, an attempt to do something new with this film while keeping the flavor and raw energy of the genre, which he knows so well.

Did he design his choreography with specific camera angles in mind?

"When you're trying to create art, [you want to be] realistic to bring people in emotionally, and fantastic to spark the imagination."

Lee: Yes, but sometimes it's very obvious what has to be done, and I could design the shot myself. Peter would then go over [the scene] to make sure it didn't have any problems — that it didn't look too ugly — and then Mr. Yuen would have

suggestions, maybe about the angle or the lens. His main concern was that his choreography looked its best. Peter is more like me, in that we wanted shots that worked best dramatically, thematically or cinematically. So we would talk and compromise, with Peter and I usually deciding the shots.

How much of the fighting action was undercranked to accentuate the speed?

Lee: Maybe half, but we never went under 20 frames per second. Almost every shot that is from the waist up is not undercranked. We used a lot of camera speeds to accentuate the action. We would also go as high as 50 fps to see exactly what was happening in some shots. With full-body shots, we'd go to 22 fps to add some energy, but we wouldn't go to 20 or 21 like they do on a lot of Hong Kong films; that looks jittery and funny.

The task of the fighting scenes in this film is not just to provoke excitement, but emotions as well. If they don't look real, that kills half the fun. For certain shots we used a digital crank-up in post if the action looked too slow. But unfortunately, the digital treatment looks like digital treatment! [Laughs.] There's no motion blur between frames, so the action jitters. It would probably be a very complex operation and very expensive to fix that problem, and we weren't in that budget league. We therefore tried not to use [that digital technique] too much, unless it was a very short portion of a shot for a specific effect. Otherwise, [we tried to] do everything in the camera.

You describe the production as 'guerrilla style,' but didn't you have to design a lot of the coverage on the big stunt setups before shooting?

Lee: Peter would ask for storyboards on big setups, but we didn't have any. We tried to do as many rehearsals as possible, but by the time we'd get to the set, we just had to

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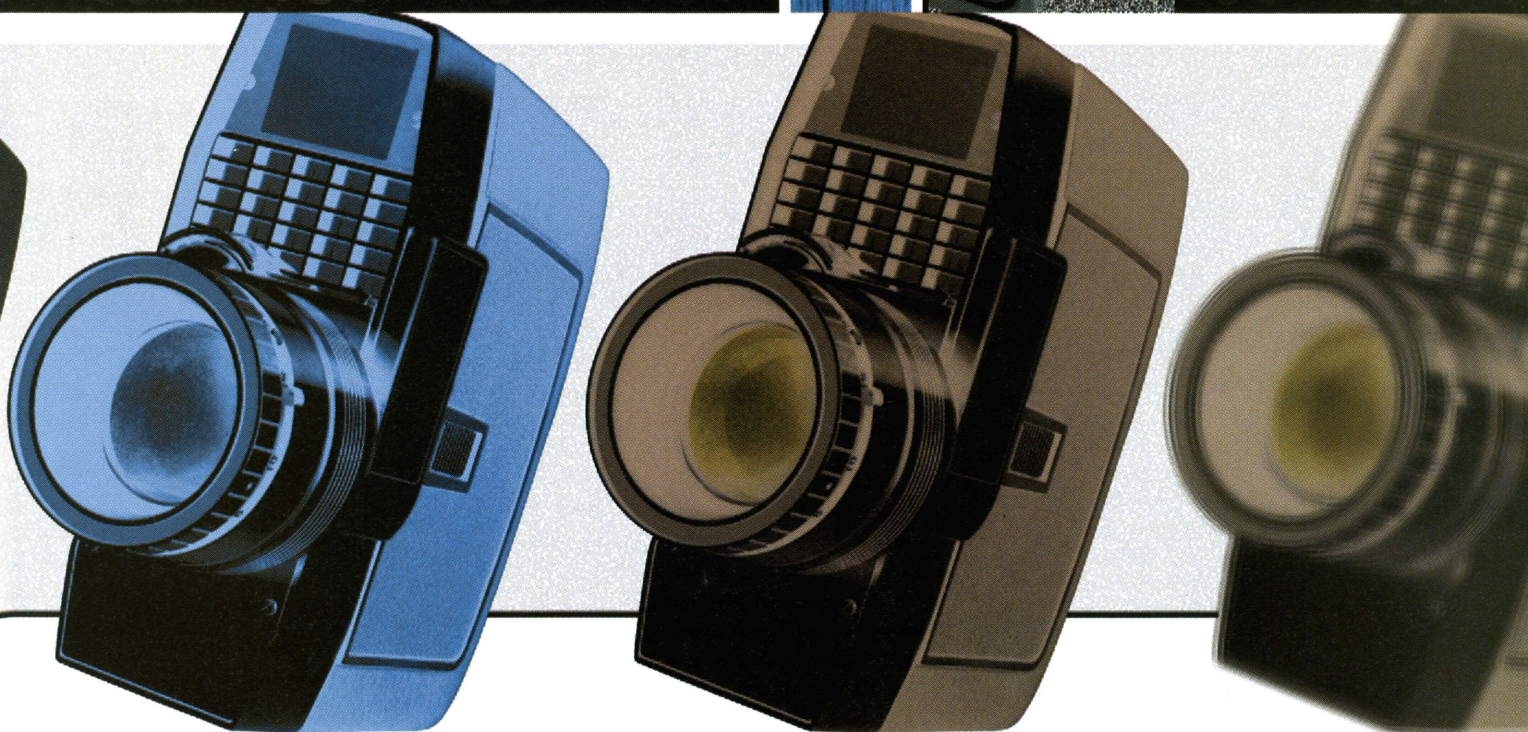
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change everything. It's a question of not only what is workable and looks best, but also what the actors can do. While you may plan for one thing, you may have to do another. The shooting was very spontaneous, working from shot to shot, so Peter had to work very hard to make it look as if we'd planned it all!

You describe *Crouching Tiger* as a boyhood dream come true. Were there images in your mind that you were able to finally realize with this picture?

Lee: Yes, like certain sequences that involve flying, and some of the fight scenes. One of the most difficult involved a chase scene in which the characters leap from rooftop to rooftop as the camera is flying over them, watching the action from above. Mr. Yuen is an expert in the style of wire work necessary for this kind of action, but one of the main reasons it had not been done before

in Hong Kong films was the expense involved for the multiple cranes and platforms needed to 'fly' the actors, and then the computer-effects work required to remove the wires.

Having the camera above the actors makes it impossible to hide the wires; you would generally do that by [shooting] up at the actor, whose body would then block the wires. There are a lot of cheesy techniques you can use to hide wires, like using smoke or smearing Vaseline on a part of the lens to blur it. But a lot of the ideas I had just weren't practical; there are reasons why people hadn't done some of the things I'd imagined, and I learned that the hard way.

How did directing the action on *Crouching Tiger* compare to what you did on *Ride With the Devil*?

Lee: *Ride With the Devil* was essentially a Western, so it was very different. Still, it was good that I'd

had that experience, because it taught me to be aware of the danger involved in stunt work, the time-consuming nature of it, and how much preparation would be required. The martial-arts genre was another thing, however. It is very specific and demands its own technique, so I had a lot to learn from Mr. Yuen.

Two things that are very different about martial-arts action are the physical intimacy and the speed of the action.

Lee: It's very quick. But I don't think that necessarily has to do with martial arts — it's about choreography, filmmaking, and the look.

One of the things I've always enjoyed in Jackie Chan's films is the way he builds a dramatic story into the action scenes; there is a beginning, middle and end.

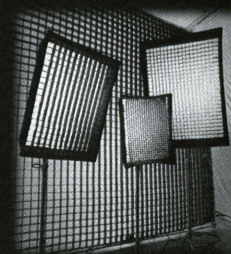
Lee: You have to do that while writing the script, planning the

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choreography and then [executing] the camerawork. It's boring to watch four solid minutes of fighting — *bang, bang, bang, bang*. Nobody can take watching that, but the stunt guys can keep at it for days! So there has to be a theme built into each fight scene to get the audience hooked, and each fight has to have a different style of coverage. The theme can be a specific kind of movement, storytelling or just pure McGuffin, but you need a hook. You can also use different weapons and different rhythms in the choreography to break things up and make them more dramatic.

Which other martial-arts films inspired you?

Lee: [Laughs.] All of them! I grew up with them and watched them all, even the boring ones. But I always enjoyed the earlier films, the Shaw Brothers films, Yuen Wo-Ping's films and, of course, Bruce Lee's and Jackie Chan's films. The entire genre

has inspired me, not necessarily specific films or filmmakers. But it's also not a very refined genre as a whole. They're generally popcorn movies, pure cinema.

Can you describe the differences between shooting in mainland China and in the United States or England?

Lee: There's nobody else in the world like the Hollywood film crews. The main portion of our crew was from Hong Kong, so this was like making a Hong Kong film in China. The production support in China was very good, but everybody had to get used to the American style of filmmaking: the technology, size, efficiency, level of communication, organization and the sophistication of the crew. Also, this was a drama and an action film — two movies in one — which made it very difficult to make in China, because the story demanded a lot of company moves.

We were centered in Beijing, where we had a lot of our locations and sets, but we traveled as far as the Summer Palace, which is a four-hour drive from the city, and the Gobi Desert in Xinjiang province, which took 10 days of travel. Then we had another week's travel down to Zhejiang province in south China for the bamboo-forest sequences. It was a big production on a modest budget.

I understand that with a budget of about \$15 million, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* was one of the biggest-budgeted films to ever shoot in China.

Lee: If I had actual money in my hands, it would be a little less, but budget-wise, compared to most Hong Kong films, this was like shooting *Titanic*. A big budget there is about \$3 million, and that's why they don't spend a lot of time on dramas — they spend all of their money shooting the action scenes! ■

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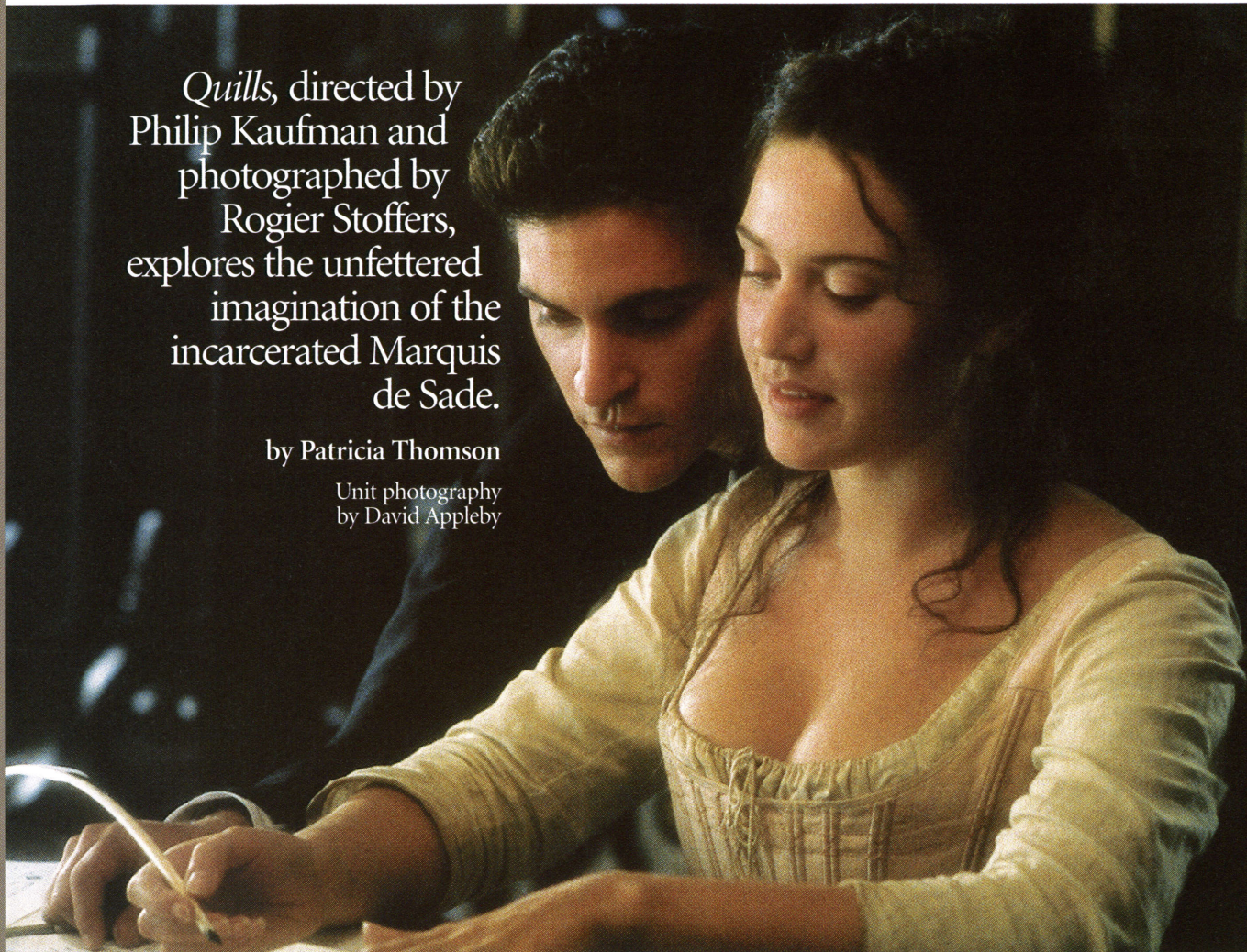

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Poison Pen

Quills, directed by Philip Kaufman and photographed by Rogier Stoffers, explores the unfettered imagination of the incarcerated Marquis de Sade.

by Patricia Thomson

Unit photography
by David Appleby



The Marquis de Sade was a bad boy and proud of it. "Imperious, choleric, irascible, extreme in everything, with a dissolute imagination the likes of which has never been seen Kill me again or take me as I am, for I shall not change," he defiantly charged in his *Last Will and Testament*. Sade invited trouble, and it came with a vengeance. His novels about perverse carnal pleasures led to three decades

behind bars, the last in an insane asylum. During his final years under Napoleon's "Reign of Virtue," he was denied his books, his pens, pencils and ink, and finally his very clothes and dignity. What's more, he went to his grave distraught over the mistaken belief that the manuscript for his grand opus, *The 120 Days of Sodom*, had been destroyed during the storming of the Bastille.

On the other hand, *Quills*, the

new film about Sade's twilight years, was blessed with good luck from day one. Fortune was smiling when director Philip Kaufman and crew arrived at their first location, the Royal Naval College in Greenwich, England, whose grand hall was a stand-in for the Palace of Versailles. To the filmmakers' surprise, the Christopher Wren building stood completely enveloped in scaffolding. No one had told them it was being

Photos courtesy of Fox Searchlight.

restored — but nothing could have been better for lighting its massive hall from the outside.

Luck also favored Rogier Stoffers, the 38-year-old Dutch cinematographer whom Kaufman tapped to be director of photography. “For me, [working with Kaufman] was a very frightening idea,” Stoffers admits. “He has worked with [ASC members] Caleb Deschanel, Michael Chapman, Sven Nyquist, Philippe Rousselot — all of these famous people — and I had done one ‘real’ film!”

However, that film, *Karakter*, won an Academy Award for Best Foreign Film in 1997. By that point in his career, Stoffers had graduated from the Amsterdam Film School, shot a Student Academy Award-winning short, and shot 21 episodes of a popular *L.A. Law*-type TV series, as well as a Dutch version of *Heimat*. *Karakter*, his first 35mm feature, was directed by his film-school friend Mike van Diem, and it demonstrated that Stoffers possessed a distinctive talent. The cinematographer infused the Dickensian story with dramatic pools of light that infiltrated a world of bleak darkness, and contrary to convention, the period film made liberal use of a Steadicam to throw audiences into the midst of class upheavals and father-son confrontations. “In Holland, people said, ‘You used Steadicam on a period movie? Why would you do that?’” Stoffers recalls.

Kaufman got it, though. “I was highly impressed by the lighting [and] the kind of constant motion,” the director says, adding that he sought just such a style for *Quills*. “I was looking for someone who could create a period look, yet move the camera in a way that had a contemporary vitality,” he notes, adding that Doug Wright’s Obie-winning play, on which the film is based, is “really meant to be a tale for our time.” The story’s underlying theme, according to Wright (who also wrote the

screenplay), is artistic repression: “Does political oppression actually breed rather than stifle provocative art?” the playwright asks. “What happens when we silence our extremists? What happens when we give them voice?”

Quills is set. The filmmakers pored over reams of material detailing the period’s architecture and insane asylums, and they also examined French paintings of the era. On a table was a 1/50 scale model of the entire Charenton set, then under



Kaufman was also aware of another parallel. He began working on the film during Kenneth Starr’s investigation of President Clinton, and thus wanted its underlying themes of moral hypocrisy to resonate. “[Kaufman] wanted that link to modern times,” says Stoffers. “He didn’t want [*Quills*] to become a beautiful, crafted period movie.”

After two meetings, Kaufman and Stoffers shook hands on a collaboration, and the cinematographer soon set off for England, where *Quills* was deep in preproduction. By the time he arrived at Pinewood Studios, where 90 percent of the film was shot, historical research was well underway. Production designer Martin Childs (*Shakespeare in Love*) had unearthed the blueprints for Charenton Asylum, where the marquis was confined and most of

construction. “The model had tiny little windows about the size of a thumbnail,” Childs recalls. “Rogier and I spent a bit of time pointing [flashlights] into those windows to see how the corridors and cells would work.”

Stoffers says his previous experiences in Holland helped him make the most of such preproduction exercises. “[Given those] low budgets and [the lack of] shooting time, I’m now used to planning everything out,” he says. Kaufman, for one, greatly appreciated that trait: “We were right on schedule and under budget,” the director recalls of the 61-day shoot. “A lot of that was due to Rogier being very well prepared. He thinks in advance, plans things out and makes his own little charts.”

The Charenton model allowed Stoffers to troubleshoot. Childs had

Opposite page: Fascinated by the Marquis de Sade and his perverse prose, chambermaid and covert literary courier Madeleine (Kate Winslet) takes pen to paper under the watchful eye of Abbé de Coulmier (Joaquin Phoenix), the enlightened priest who runs Charenton Asylum. This page: The incorrigible marquis (Geoffrey Rush), unbowed by the authorities’ attempts to silence him, stirs up trouble by provoking and manipulating his fellow inmates.

Poison Pen



Above: The randy marquis entices the virginal Madeleine with lascivious whispers. **Below:** Director Philip Kaufman confers with Winslet and Rush in the Charenton set.

designed a curved corridor leading to the cell occupied by the marquis. This becomes the path of temptation for a virginal chambermaid, Madeleine (Kate Winslet), who helps the marquis (Geoffrey Rush) publish his illicit works by smuggling his manuscripts out with the laundry.

"We wanted the hallways to have real ceilings, and we wanted everything to be round," Stoffers says. "The models and the drawings of the set gave me ideas about where to add little places to hide my lights. [The hallways] were the hardest areas to light."

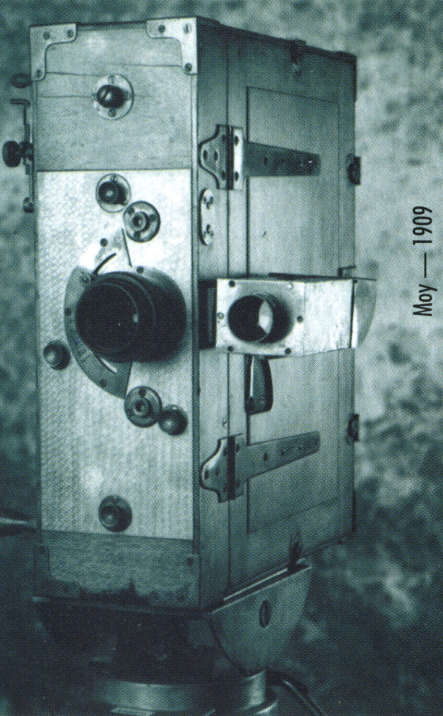
Stoffers also spent preproduc-

tion time figuring out an appropriate palette for the film. If the foremost challenge was how to walk the line between a historical and modern tone, then color was one of the key solutions. At the outset, the filmmakers decided to avoid the sepia hue that characterizes so many period films. They knew they wanted a desaturated look, but they didn't want to reduce the colors in processing. The cinematographer says he did not want to use a bleach-bypass or similar silver-retention process like ENR because those techniques would create a level of contrast that he doesn't like on actors' faces, and he knew there would be a lot of close-ups in the film. Additionally, he didn't like the fact that the studio might do the process only on the film's "show prints" (those that go to major cities).

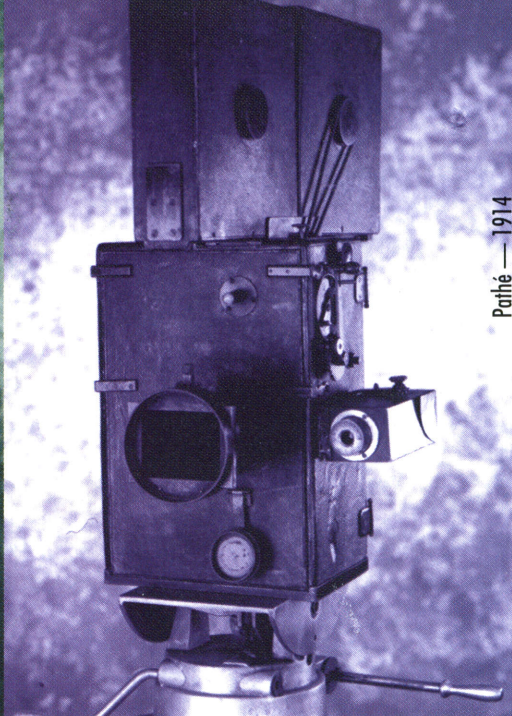
In sifting through stacks of paintings, the filmmakers hit upon a solution. "I noticed a green that we really loved," Stoffers recalls. "Mainly it's in the varnish that has colored over time." This color was particularly noticeable in the paintings of Louis Leopold Boilly, as well as in some of Chardin's still lifes. "The fruit has different colors, but this green [hue over the painting] somehow takes the hard color out of it," he explains. "It suggests a period feeling to me. But at the same time, modern commercials very often have a cyan tone, and since we were talking about not making *Quills* a 'real' period movie, but rather as contemporary as possible, I went that way." In the end, he settled on a palette of white, warm tones and green.

Stoffers chose to work exclusively with Kodak Vision 500T 5279 stock for interiors and exteriors. "I love to shoot everything on one stock, if possible," he says. "The 500 ASA EXR 5298 is a beautiful stock, but it's a bit rougher and less polished, a bit grittier." He used an Arri 535 as his A-camera and a





Moy — 1909



Pathé — 1914



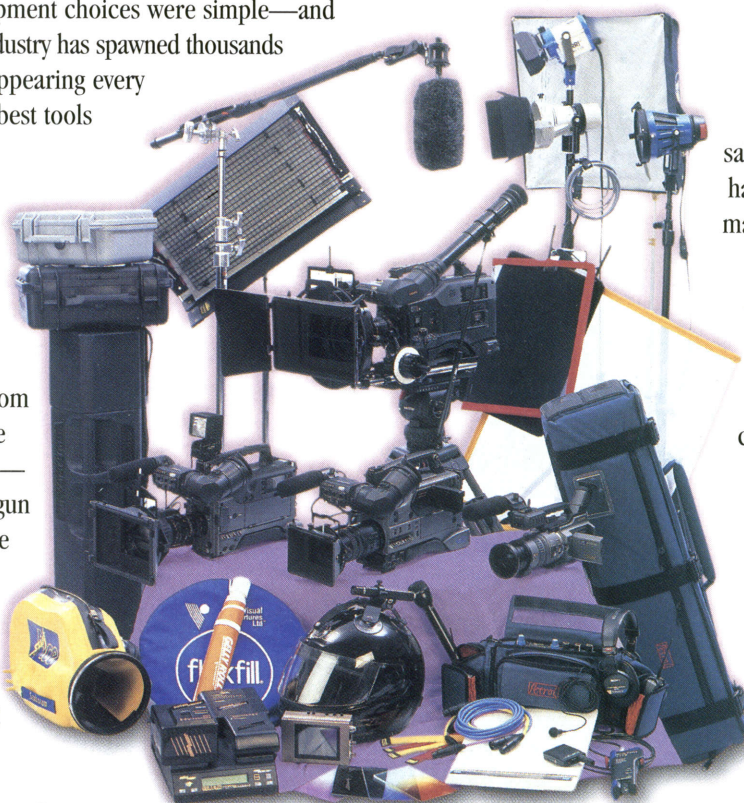
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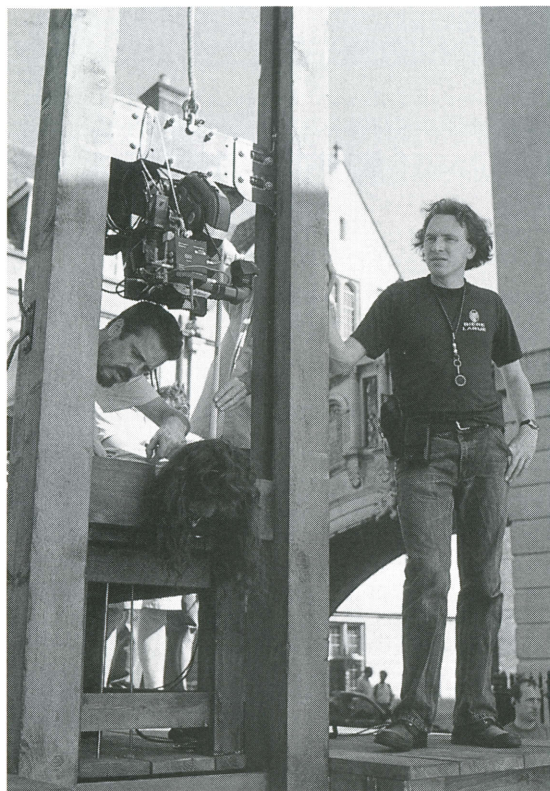
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Poison Pen



Above: "Ready to roll?" Stoffers prepares a special "Guillotine Cam" to simulate a beheading. Right: The cinematographer captures a heroic close-up of the principled priest.

Moviecam for Steadicam work. "I worked with normal Zeiss prime lenses and Arri Variable Primes, because we wanted to be able to change focal lengths; the nice thing about Variable Primes is [that they] have about the same stop as normal primes, so you can interchange the two."

The filmmakers' method of achieving the green patina involved two complementary techniques, one in production and one in post. The simpler of the two involved adding a bit more green to the printer lights during color timing. "Normally, if you do that too much, it's something you lose, because your eyes get used to it," Stoffers explains. "But if you use it a little bit, while [keeping] the costumes in a certain tone and not changing the colors of the walls, it will work."

The greater effort came on set. This involved coating the asylum walls with a green slime created by applying tinted enamel varnish. "We wanted to give the impression that the walls were alive and dripping with *madness*," says Childs with a

delighted laugh. "What was fantastically helpful to me — though probably not to anybody who had to schedule the film — was that Kaufman wanted to shoot the film in [continuity]. So we were adding green and decay as the story happened, a luxury we're normally never allowed. We were, for the first time in my experience, able to make a set *live*."

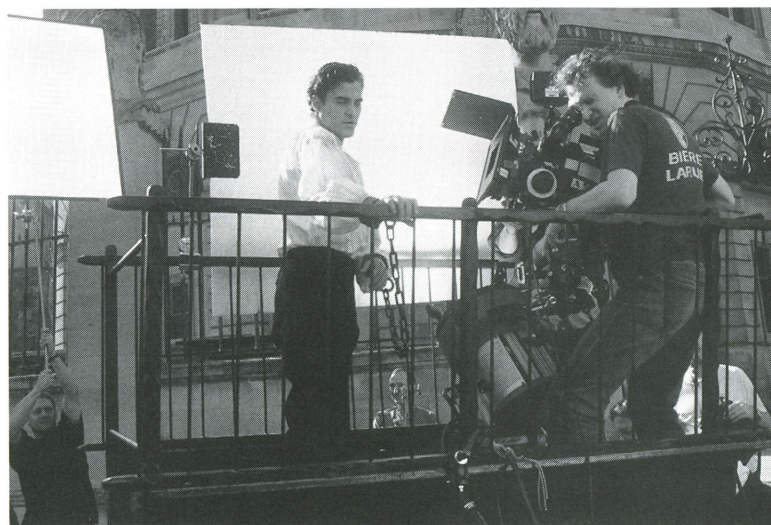
That was important to Kaufman, who wanted the characters' milieu to degenerate as their repression increased. The crackdown begins with the arrival of a hard-line moralist, Dr. Royer-Collard (Michael Caine), who's assigned to beat back the progressive ideas of the asylum's enlightened priest, Abbé de Coulmier (Joaquin Phoenix). "However horrible the asylum might be, you should initially feel that it's a place where there is a kind of beauty, and that things are working quite well [there]," says the director. Indeed, lunatics sing in a choir and paint, the marquis is in charge of an amateur acting troupe, there are dalliances within the staff, "and pornography can exist without making the asylum a horrible place," notes Kaufman.

He continues, "Once [the authorities] begin to repress the marquis and his writings, he responds in his kind of childlike ways. [At that point,] the story not

only begins to get a bit jagged and tense, but you begin to notice — subliminally, we hope — that the walls begin to leak. Water drains down, and things get dirtier and murkier. The camera [movement] becomes more Gothic, as if you are in a horror movie — a kind of insanity [creeps] into the structure of the building and the photography. There's a shot of the pit where the marquis is chained at the end, and even though we still hope that there is an element of beauty in that Pieta, something horrific is going on there. It's a sane insane asylum at the beginning of the film, and an *insane* insane asylum by the end."

During production, Stoffers faced certain built-in restrictions. Because of the picture's time period, he had to simulate pre-electricity light sources, such as torches, candles, moonlight and sun. In addition, the locations included some historic buildings which had a number of "do not touch" provisions.

Such was the case with the Royal Naval College, where the production was using the very room where King Henry VIII had signed Anne Boleyn's death warrant. In the scene shot there, an incensed Napoleon listens to a particularly lurid passage from Sade's *Justine* and decides to dispatch Royer-Collard to



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Poison Pen

Charenton to put an end to the author's writing. All the while, the emperor is posing for his portrait in a vast hall illuminated by shafts of light streaming through a dozen massive windows.

Fortunately, the room needed very little dressing. "We covered up bits of a painting [that virtually took up the entire back wall]; it gave away the fact that the room was at the Royal Naval College," Childs recalls. "Other than that, we completely emptied the room of everything but the essential pieces of furniture,

The round or zeppelin-shaped light balloons were, in fact, a continual blessing in the historic manors and chapels of *Quills*. "If [you're filming in] old buildings or churches, you're never allowed to build any scaffolding, touch the ceilings or build any grip rigs," the cinematographer explains. "You can just fill the balloons with helium and float them in the air from the floor for a big source of soft light. They're hard to control, but they don't generate any heat because the helium cools down the light."

Since light balloons have come into wider use, "they're getting better and bigger," Stoffers adds. "They make lighting go faster, though it's not always the *best* way to light." For one thing, it is sometimes difficult to control the direction of the light; the cinematographer says he often spray-paints paper balloons with colored ink (because it's hard to filter them) and builds iron rings around them so that he can hang black cloth in an effort to direct the light. For another thing, he says, "it's sometimes difficult to avoid fighting with the boom operator because you're both trying to be in the same place!"

He should know, because he was often the one dragging a small balloon around on a boom pole for *Quills* — that is, when he wasn't behind the camera the other 98 percent of the time. In Holland, this is a typical state of affairs. "We don't have operators there. On the movie I'm doing now [directed by Nick Cassavetes], I'm working for the first time with a camera operator, and I find it very hard," Stoffers admits. "I want to see lighting through a lens. Framing and lighting go so much together. When you're operating yourself, you can do exactly what you want, but sometimes operators are forced by the director or an actor to do certain things, and suddenly the whole balance of your light goes away."

The only time Stoffers wasn't

operating the camera on *Quills* was during Steadicam shots, for which John Ward, Vince McGahon and Alastair Rae were employed. But given the style of *Karakter* and Kaufman's goal of creating long, fluid shots — "in a sense, to keep the sentences long," as the director put it — Stoffers wound up using the Steadicam less than expected. The reason owes to a different working method. "In England, they never dolly on tracks," Stoffers explains. "The great system of England is that they have many standbys — standby

Determined to defy the iron will of Dr. Royer-Collard (Michael Caine), the marquis hatches a scheme to inflame the sexual fantasies of his young bride, Simone (Amelia Warner).



because we realized that the best thing about the room was its size. Emptying it out and just having tiny little people in there — one of whom was Napoleon — seemed to be the way to treat it."

With scaffolding conveniently in place for the exterior's restoration, Stoffers could easily set up lights to create the beams of sunlight: he deployed an 18K HMI outside each of the 12 windows. But the torch-lit interior proved trickier. "Because of the paintings, we weren't allowed to bring in too many big lights. We ended up using helium balloons to get the warm lighting," says Stoffers, who placed a variety of 2K to 10K tungsten lights inside these devices.



painters, standby carpenters, standby plasterers — but they all are grips. They all can lay dance floors and do construction. And they were laying dance floors all the time [on *Quills*], so a lot of shots where I normally would think about a Steadicam shot suddenly could be done with a dolly."

Such was the case in the scene where the hard-line doctor inspects his newly acquired estate, walking up the grand staircase and through its long corridors and salons. "Stephen Burum [ASC] used to avoid using a Steadicam because he said dollies could do everything," Stoffers muses. "I always thought, 'How is that possible?' But now I understand."

There were instances, however,

A dramatic scene of a child hanging from a rope over a rushing waterfall. The child is wearing a white sweater and dark pants. A person is visible on the bridge above, holding the rope. The background is a dark, rocky cliff face.

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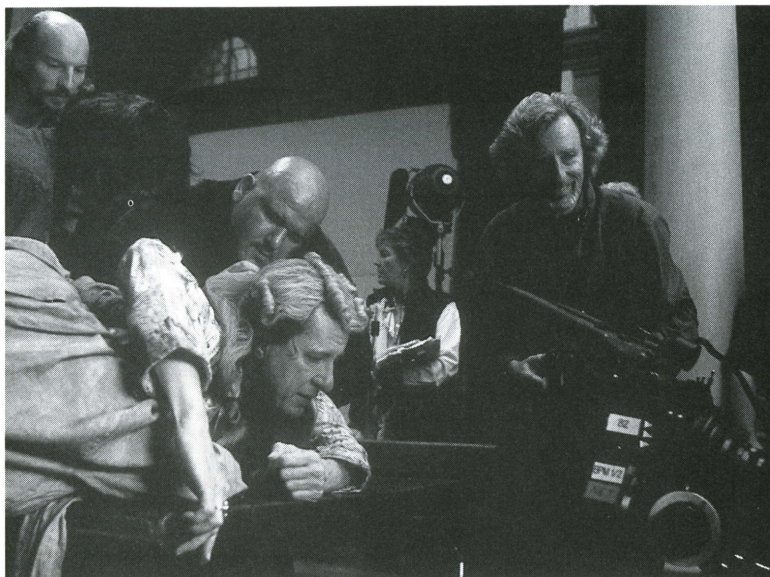
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Kaufman and company ready Rush for a close-up.



when the filmmakers didn't anticipate using Steadicam but found that the rig solved a sticky problem. One such moment occurred during the filming of a climactic scene in which the priest, angered over Sade's

surreptitious publishing, storms down the curved hallway and into the writer's cell. They confront each other while aides strip the cell of its books, wine collection and pornographic knickknacks, and the argu-

ment then spills back into the corridor. Stoffers notes that "Phil said, 'We could spend three days shooting a scene like this because there's so much happening.' I said it wouldn't have the energy [if we did that]. Up until then, [the priest] had been quite passive in his treatment of the marquis, [but] now he's getting really upset and he starts *doing* something. We therefore wanted to get that energy into the scene."

Kaufman and Stoffers decided to film the sequence in a 2 1/2-minute Steadicam shot that would bring the camera down the hallway, around the cell, then back out again. Stoffers choreographed the camera movement using a viewfinder he had built, which has a built-in video assist and small monitor beside it: "You can screw the lens in, walk around with the lens in your hand, see the framing and find your shot." The advantage, he explains, is that "you can rehearse

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the scene several times without tiring the Steadicam operator." In the end, says Stoffers, "we worked for the whole day, then we shot it. And that put us a day ahead!"

Because the camera moved 360 degrees, Stoffers had to choreograph the lighting as well. This task required six assistants turning, dimming, and changing handheld lights while dodging out of view when the camera turned. Here, as in many scenes, Stoffers relied on his collection of Chimera lightbanks, which were often supplemented with a honeycomb grid. This combination "allows you to direct quite a lot of soft light to a very specific place. You can turn it around with people when they're walking, and at the right angle it won't show up on walls. You can keep it moody and dark, and at the same time have soft light in places where you want it."

Chimeras supplemented the

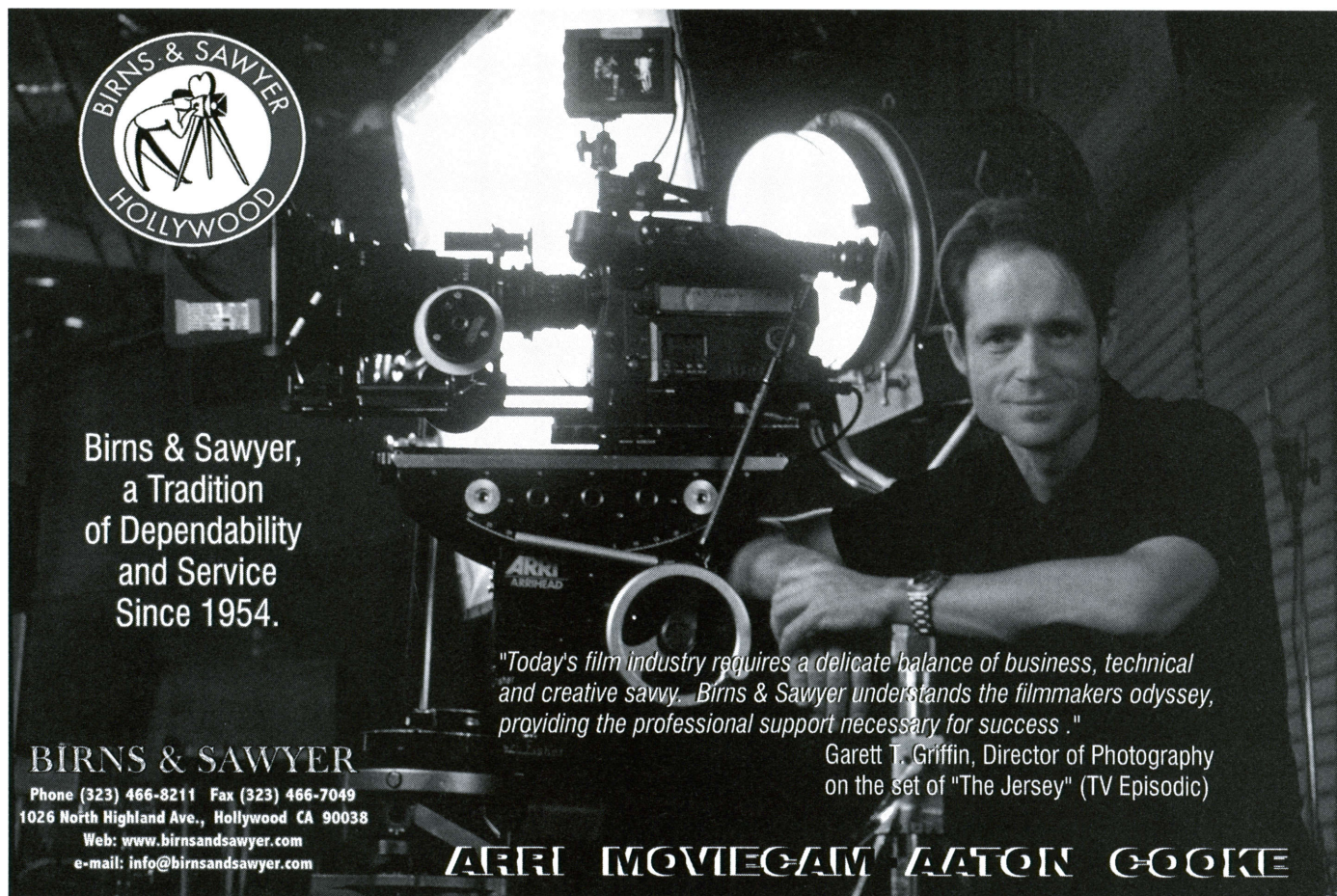
candles and torchlight in numerous scenes, such as those set in the inmates' smaller cells, each of which was ostensibly lit by a single flame and a tiny window. Stoffers offers, "You can hide Chimeras in all kinds of small places, and when the [actors] moved near a candle, we used small handheld Chimeras with a grid." These cut down on the overall number of lights required.

One of the more difficult setups was a sequence in which the marquis stages a provocative play that mocks Royer-Collard and his young, nubile wife. Stoffers had few places to tuck away his lights because the theater-in-the-round was not originally designed for this scene — it was built to be the asylum's laundry room. What's more, he was using a 270-degree Steadicam shot with actors darting everywhere. "We had four fires on the corners of the stage. To simulate that lighting, the only

thing we could do was put Kino Flos on the floor with heavy gels, which melted down in the end."

To enlarge the effect of the torchlight, Stoffers pulled an old trick out of the bag: a woman's stocking. "We wanted to do something to soften the image. We ended up using a net behind the lens and a Black ProMist in front of it."

"Rogier has a good eye, and he's an enthusiastic guy," Kaufman concludes. "It's great to see your director of photography running up and down stairs, scrunched over a camera, dying to do an extra take, staying up late nights thinking of the next day's work, planning in advance where he's going to put his lights, and making little diagrams, so that when he shows up you're ready to work. I've worked with many great cinematographers, and I feel he's in that league." ■



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The Way of the West

Director Billy Bob Thornton and cinematographer Barry Markowitz lend *All the Pretty Horses* an authentic Western ambience.

by David Wiener

Unit photography
by Van Redin



Director of photography Barry Markowitz started out teaching high school and working part time as a headwaiter in Brooklyn — an unlikely beginning for someone who would later serve as director of photography on a \$60 million widescreen Western. “My father said I could work at that restaurant only if I didn’t touch the food, because it wasn’t kosher,” Markowitz remembers. “It was an Italian place, and believe me, it was

hard to keep away from the prosciutto. Finally my father said, ‘Either teach full time or do something else.’”

Markowitz opted for something else. He found a job at a film-equipment rental house and got to know camera gear and camera operators. He took the union test and was admitted as a second assistant, but “the first few months were hard,” he says. “I was calling all of the first assistants I’d ever met, and slowly they

started using me. Eventually I became a first assistant.” His big break came when Steadicam creator Garrett Brown took him on as an assistant. They became good friends, and Markowitz began thinking about finding work as a director of photography, even though his reel was less than stellar. “God, you wouldn’t even *look* at it!” he says with a laugh. “I had bedouins roaming around the desert, along with some car ads! I ran into an agent who basi-

Photos courtesy of Miramax Films.

cally felt sorry for me and signed me up. And little by little, I actually got work.”

His next big step up came when he landed a job as an assistant camera operator on Robert Duvall’s *Angelo, My Love* (1983). Duvall liked Markowitz so much that he asked him to film *The Apostle*. “I was dreaming of doing that movie!” Markowitz says. “But one day, I was at Bobby Duvall’s farm and he threw me Billy Bob Thornton’s script for *Sling Blade*. I read it in about 20 minutes and thought it was so great that I begged Bobby to call Billy. He laughed and said, ‘Hey, maybe you can go practice on Billy’s film!’ And Billy was gracious enough to have me! By that time, I’d shot two [foreign] features, and Billy was impressed that I could do fast, good-looking work on a very low budget.”

Markowitz proceeded to earn his first domestic director of photography credit on *Sling Blade*, and he later photographed *The Apostle* for Duvall. Thornton called the cinematographer again when he began planning *All the Pretty Horses*, which was based on the 1992 novel by Cormac McCarthy. “Billy called me and said, ‘You got any horses on your reel?’ Markowitz recalls. “[I knew that if he was] asking for sample footage, it meant that the studio had some questions about using me. They were considering some very big cinematographers, [because] Billy was planning to direct a big Western in 2.40:1 anamorphic. The closest I had [come] to anamorphic experience was a couple of Tidy-Bowl world tour ads! But Billy stood up for me, and that was that.”

Before principal photography began last March, Thornton had Markowitz screen two classic westerns, *High Noon* (shot by Floyd Crosby, ASC) and *The Searchers* (shot by Winton C. Hoch, ASC). The cinematographer also began researching the anamorphic format. “I got lots of information from [ASC



members] Jack Green and Haskell Wexler, and I also did my own research,” he says. “When you go anamorphic, you gain the grand scope, but your depth of field is effectively cut in half; to achieve the ‘normal’ field of view [of a 50mm lens in standard spherical photography], you end up using a 100mm lens in anamorphic. Having less depth of field also increases the possibility of having to do reshoots because of bad focus, which you don’t want on a \$100,000-a-day project.”

To give himself the greatest possible margin for error, Markowitz used multiple cameras: a Panaflex



Platinum, a Panaflex GII, and a Panaflex Lightweight II, along with a complement of Primo, E- and C-Series primes, as well as three anamorphic zooms. He also pumped in plenty of light and worked almost exclusively with Kodak Vision 500T 5279 stock, except while shooting plates and background footage for the credits, which he photographed on Kodak EXR 5245 rated normally.

Markowitz says his high stops were sometimes disconcerting for the cast and crew. “I wanted to shoot at T11 or T16 most of the time, so I was lighting scenes that looked like Christmas!” he says with a laugh. “I was at T11 for a day interior and lighting walls to T4! But as long as the subject-to-background exposure ratios were right, I knew it would look good when it was printed down. As long as we provided a rich, fat negative, it would work. Still, it was hard to look at that kind of lighting and say, ‘Okay, pull the trigger!’”

Many of the film’s locations were in the high country of New Mexico at elevations of 6,500 feet and higher. In that rarefied area, the light has an “incredible and unexplainable quality,” Markowitz enthuses. “You can see forever. The horizon just begs for anamorphic. We had gorgeous mornings with pretty clouds, and we’d put up a 30-by-30 black Duvetyn canopy stretched between two cranes about 20 feet above the actors for negative fill, just to kill the ambient [light]. That gave the actors’ faces a nice, even look and left the background much hotter. I hardly used any lights for exterior day scenes — I don’t like seeing little dots in people’s eyes. When the early-morning light went away, I’d put two 85 filters on the lens to warm things up and shoot with them for the rest of the day. When the sun began to go down, I’d take off the filters. That way, I got a warmer look for all of the day scenes, even if it wasn’t early morning or late afternoon.”

Opposite: *All the Pretty Horses* follows young Texan John Grady (Matt Damon), who sets out for Mexico with friends and finds even more adventure than he expected. **This page top:** Grady and Alejandra (Penelope Cruz, also pictured below) get better acquainted at a Saturday night dance.

The Way of the West

Top: Many of the film's locations were in the high country of New Mexico, where light "has an incredible and unexplainable quality," according to cinematographer Barry Markowitz. Bottom: Grady and Alejandra's relationship heats up during a nighttime swim.



In some shots, the actors were lit almost as silhouettes. "[That] looked great, even if it made no logical sense," the cinematographer asserts. "For instance, [in one shot] Matt Damon is in the foreground, looking at a cliff overhang 20 feet away. We blocked all of the sunlight from his face and left what he was looking at burned out, so his face was T2.8 and what he was looking at was T32, with the lens three feet from him."

Close-ups were often shot with a 180mm lens situated 10 feet away and with a 40mm lens about three feet away to provide coverage. The cowboy hats that proliferated among the cast presented no problem; Markowitz took the meter reading from the shadowed face beneath the brim (usually a T8) and occasionally filled in with a 4' x 8' piece of beadboard placed on the ground, or with an angled 4' x 4' bounce board attached to the bottom of the camera.

All the Pretty Horses opens with a dreamlike, slow-motion vision of a herd of mustangs thundering across the night landscape (see diagram on page 93). "We actually filmed that scene last," Markowitz notes. "Billy wanted a [location] with mountains in the

background, and he wanted to see the horses appear out of almost pitch darkness. The sound of the hooves gets louder and louder, and then they burst into view."

This mystical image of the Old West was shot at Ghost Ranch in New Mexico, a place often painted by Georgia O'Keefe. A path was cleared through brush, and the horses were rehearsed for two weeks. High frame rates (40-80 fps) combined with the anamorphic format made Markowitz "desperate" for light. "We had 18K HMIs, 6K Pars and three Muscos!" he says. "I put pools of light along the horses' path so they'd run into a T16 [area], then into a T8, then a T5.6, almost black, before suddenly bursting into a T11."

Five cameras rolled on each take: the A-camera was a Spacecam traveling on a 1,500' Cablecam run overhead; cameras B and C were on two separate insert vehicles driving along a gravel road built especially for the shot; camera D was stationary and positioned at the far end of the run; and camera E was a Pan-Arri with a wide-angle lens planted right in the middle of the run. The Spacecam, a gyro-stabilized remote camera housing, moved at speeds of 15-20 mph on the steel cable, which is supported by cranes at both ends. Although the cable was level, its run was full of rises and dips, so the height of the Spacecam varied between 10' and 40' above the ground.

"Filming from the insert vehicles was a real headache," Markowitz says. "We were using long lenses, and that made every bump visible, even though we had the cameras on Louma cranes with gyro-controlled mounts. I operated one of those cameras and zoomed in to about 250mm on the first pass, but I had to widen out to 150mm [because] it was just too unsteady. The dips made me tilt up and down, so even at 80 fps I knew I'd only get pieces that looked really good from the insert road. Still,

it went a lot better than we thought — we'd planned for four nights of shooting but we got it in one."

The film's narrative begins with a funeral: the grandfather of teenager John Grady has died at the family ranch in Texas. Shortly thereafter, Grady (Matt Damon) sets off for Mexico with two friends, Lacey Rawlins (Henry Thomas) and a younger boy named Blevins (Lucas Black). "There was no lighting for the funeral, [not even any] bounce — it was a perfect, gray day!" Markowitz exults. "The clouds were rolling in and the wind was blowing, so we didn't need any fans. When we shot the reverse angles, a lightning storm was brewing, and we just lapped it up! You'll think it's CGI. We used two cameras and the 79 stock, and under the awning I could work at T5.6 and go in for close-ups. I was stacking ND filters on the lens to bring the exposure down from T45! As the light started to fail later in the day, I'd just unstack. We had a lot of wind, sand and dust, but we got a lot of mileage out of those harsh conditions."

The three boys get into trouble early on when they're caught in a violent storm and Blevins loses his horse — a catastrophe for any





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The Way of the West



Top: Grady bids farewell to Rawlins in Mexico. The scene's period ambience was crafted by production designer Clark Hunter. **Bottom:** Pictured from the left, director Billy Bob Thornton, Markowitz, an unidentified crewmember and Damon confer during a break on the set.

cowboy. They track the animal to a small village, where they find it penned in a corral. Blevins sneaks into the enclosure, mounts his horse, crashes through the wooden fence and decides to separate from his friends. The scene was shot at night with Musco lights and two Condor lifts, each carrying an 18K and a 6K Par HMIs. "That was a huge area, and I couldn't risk having any equipment in the shot," Markowitz explains. "I didn't want to have to find places to hide lights when it was time for reverse angles, so I used four big Muscos as the main source and left them clean, with no gels or filters on them. I backed them away from the surrounding trees so I could splash

the light down through the trees and use the branches as cucolorises. I also had a few smaller tungsten lights scattered around, but nothing that would be difficult to move. Because of all the angles, sometimes a crane arm holding up a Musco had to be left in frame; when that happened, I made sure that no light was hitting the arm, which we covered with black Duvetyn."

Grady first meets his love interest, Alejandra (Penelope Cruz), at her family's magnificent Mexican hacienda, La Purisima. A ranch near Helotes, Texas, was transformed into this lush paradise by production designer Clark Hunter, whose crew added a second story to the main house, built a fountain in the courtyard, and landscaped the grounds with truckloads of tropical plants. "For day exteriors at La Purisima, we didn't use lights, just ambient daylight," Markowitz notes. "Grady first sees Alejandra riding her horse in a day scene; for her close-ups, [we just used] a beadboard fill card to give her a nice, soft glow. There was plenty of exposure on her face, but it was a hazy day, and because this was the moment when Grady first meets Alejandra, we really wanted to be able to see her."

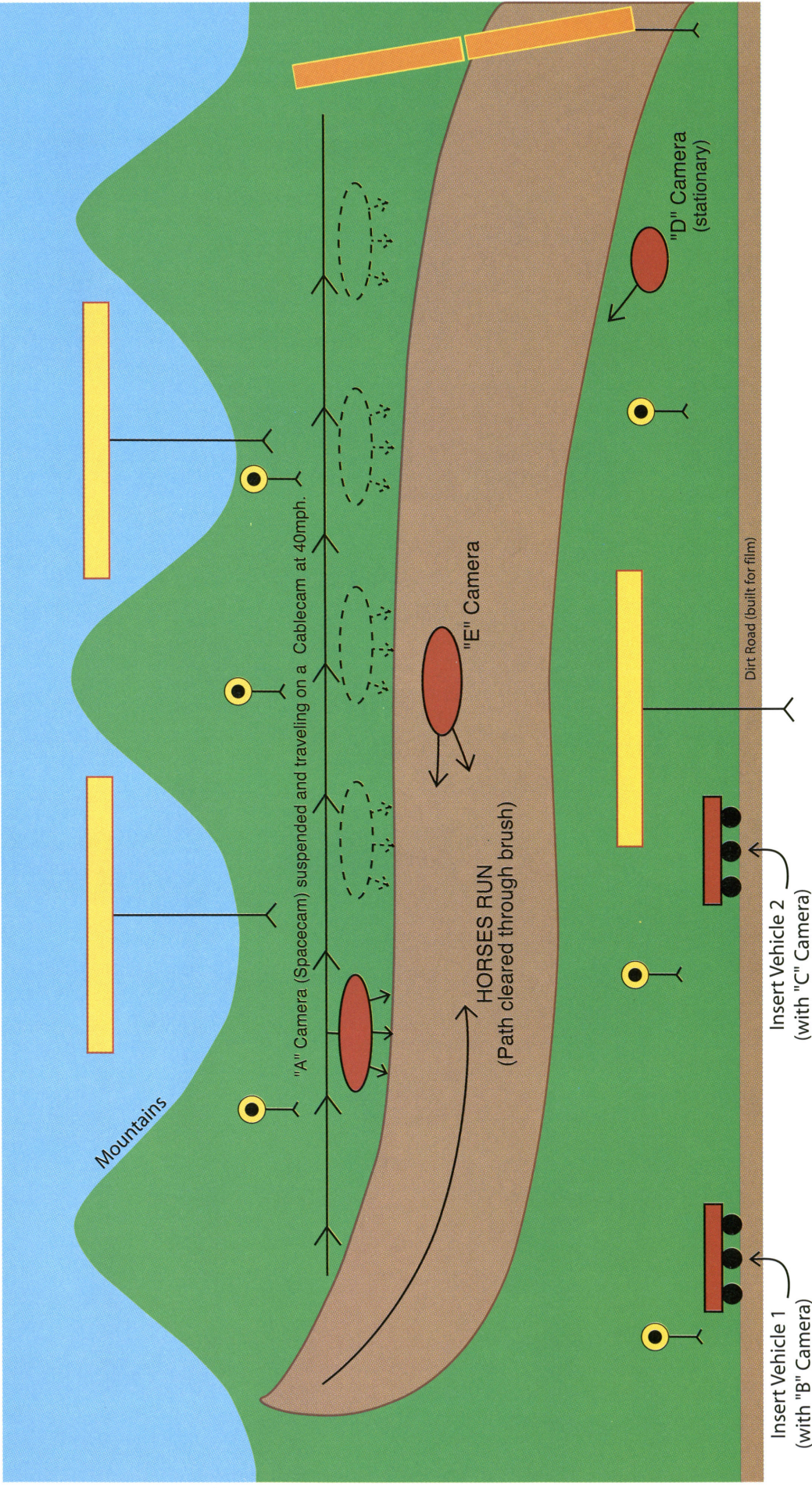


To impress Alejandra, Grady and Rawlins stage a marathon version of the traditional bucking-bronco ritual, breaking 16 wild horses in four days. "We did a lot of great handheld stuff with the Panavision Lightweight, and we also did some crane shots," Markowitz says. "We [shot during] morning, daytime, dusk, and night so we could dissolve through the characters' four-day effort. As night started to fall, I'd take the double 85s off the lens and just keep shooting till the light was gone. For some of the broad-daylight shots, I'd take off the 85s just to give it a different look. When they broke horses at night, I used Musco lights for wide shots, and for tighter shots I used some bounced 20Ks, Wall-O-Lites, or 6K Pars gelled warm, because we also had lots of torches and firelight in the frame."

Not long after this impressive display, Grady and Alejandra get better acquainted at a big Saturday night dance. "Billy doesn't do the traditional thing — master shot, his close-up, her close-up," Markowitz points out. "He likes a sweeping and improvisational feel, with a lot of tracking and Steadicam. There's a long tracking shot as Grady and Rawlins arrive at the dance hall, hitch up their horses and go inside. That was a lot of ground to cover in one shot, but it created the spontaneous feeling that Billy likes. We tracked the actors as they walked under an awning, so I had to frontlight them. I hated to do that, but I needed good exposure on their faces because the audience had to recognize who they were in a medium shot. I used two Kino Flo Wall-O-Lites for that. Inside the dance hall, we used 12 space lights on dimmers overhead and a bounced 20K from way behind the camera; we just let the light from the 20K fall off along the length of the hall."

Although breaking 16 horses

Continued on page 96



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BACK IN THE SADDLE

Interview by Jean Oppenheimer

The third collaboration between director Billy Bob Thornton and cinematographer Barry Markowitz, *All the Pretty Horses* reunites the team that made *Sling Blade* (which earned Thornton the 1997 Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay, as well as a nomination for Best Actor) and *Daddy and Them*, which has not yet

All I wanted to do was capture the spirit of the book, and I think we did. There is something a little otherworldly about the novel. McCarthy's writing seems to have ghosts in it, which is what I love about all the writers I like. They all seem to have that same quality. To be honest, I don't know that I want to be responsible for just being a director on someone else's

keeps wanting more and more: faster, louder, harder. People can't seem to sit still and watch a movie anymore. Until there is an artistic and cultural revolution in this country, we are going to keep speeding up, and one day we'll just explode. Plus, movies are made by test audiences these days. I'm not in that business.

It sounds as if this project was a disappointing experience for you.

Thornton: Quite the contrary; it was a wonderful experience. We brought it in under budget and under schedule, and we had a lot of fun making it.

When I visited the set, I was struck by how laid-back and relaxed everything was. How do you maintain that type of work atmosphere?

Thornton: My crew is always the same, and we know each other very well. Plus, I have a rule that nobody fights or argues. If you can't have fun at it, there is no point in doing it.

How involved do you get in choosing the format, the film stock and the lenses?

Thornton: I'm involved in everything, but I rely on people who know what they are doing. I know what I want, and fortunately I am able to communicate that to my people. I never studied filmmaking, and I haven't read books on lenses; I've learned what I like just from directing three pictures.

I shoot a lot of close-ups with wider lenses, which I have been doing since *Sling Blade*. I like to use a 21mm or 27mm on a close-up.

Why?

Thornton: It's the difference in the effect it has on people. In a wide-angle close-up, you get the person right there at the front of the frame, and you see their whole world with them. There is something about the vulnerability of a person within their surroundings.

I also tell actors to look directly into the lens, which is supposedly a no-no. There is more power that way.

Director Billy Bob Thornton, right, goes over an upcoming shot with Matt Damon.



been released. Markowitz also shot *The Apostle*, which featured Thornton in one of his many supporting roles.

All the Pretty Horses was adapted from Cormac McCarthy's novel of the same name by screenwriter Ted Tally, and it's the first project directed by Thornton that he has not also written himself. *AC* caught up with the director in Seattle, where he was co-starring in a film for director Barry Levinson.

American Cinematographer: What was it like directing a film you had not written?

Billy Bob Thornton: This was a much bigger film than the other two I directed — it's a big old Hollywood picture — and I don't have final cut.

things. I think this may be the end of doing big movies for me.

Was the film taken away from you?

Thornton: No, I just never had final cut. I'm [actually] very happy not only with the studio's cut but also with their willingness to listen to my editing suggestions. It's more that this is an epic book [that should be] an epic movie, but these days the studios want you to make it commercial, for teenagers and all that. Those big movies with the loud music and the big noise — God bless them if they entertain people, but the idea of making some movie that is just a big, loud entertainment spectacle [doesn't particularly appeal to me.]

It seems that everyone today

While you can barely tell the difference between looking at the matte box and looking directly at the lens, there is enough of a difference. If the movie is a comedy, [that technique] makes it even funnier, and if it's a drama, it makes it even more intense.

Barry Markowitz said you would shoot close-ups with everything from a 180mm lens situated 10 feet away to a 40mm lens maybe three feet away.

Thornton: Yes, we went with extremes a lot. We shoot more the way they did in the 1940s and '50s. I like to shoot a lot of things in a master [shot].

I also like things to be really dark in night scenes. Cinematographers, of course, always want things to be seen a little bit. [Laughs.] One of my running things with Barry is that he'll light something forever, and when I get to the set I have to turn off all the lamps. There is one scene in the movie that takes place at night in a field, and I wanted to show the house and the darkness and then pick up our two guys talking. The crew lit for five hours, and I got out there and told them to shut off all of the lights.

All of the lights? There were no movie lights at all?

Thornton: There were lights in the house and a little bit of light on the guys — manufactured light. If it were up to me, you wouldn't see their faces at all, but you can't do that. The way I shot it may not make it into the final cut. There's a lot of stuff that may not make the final cut. For example, there's one scene in which Matt [Damon's] character sees his father for the last time, and I let the father walk away down the sidewalk for about two minutes. If that shot were in a movie from the 1940s, people would say it was astounding. You shoot a scene like that now, and they look at you like you're crazy.

Barry says you don't shoot in a traditional manner of doing a master, a close-up of one actor, and

then a close-up of the other. He says that you prefer to create a spontaneous feeling.

Thornton: When I got into this business, I thought that the idea was to try and capture real life and move people — or to do pure fantasy. The Coen brothers shoot [in a style that's] the opposite of mine: everything is planned out and edited in their heads. I see the picture, too, but in more of a spiritual sense. I see it as this sort of long story.

Oprah Winfrey saw *All the Pretty Horses* and said, 'It's not a movie that you watch; it's a movie that you feel.' And that's pretty much the way I do things — it's what I feel. We don't do storyboards; we don't have a shot list; we don't have rehearsals. I just make sure that Barry gives the actors enough freedom to go wherever they want, and then I cover the scene based upon that.

I like two-shots with actors — or three-shots, or however many shots, depending on how many people are in the scene. I like to stay with that [approach] as long as I can, because sometimes the most interesting thing is the person who is listening; the words may hit you differently when you see that person.

In real life, when I am looking at you, I am looking you in the eye, and that's why I have actors look into the lens. They say it's breaking the fourth wall. I thought you kind of wanted to do that. You want the audience to feel they are the person the actor on the screen is talking to.

For example, there's a scene in *Sling Blade* when John Ritter and I are sitting in a diner. A lot of that sequence was done as a two-shot so that the audience can see the whole picture; you can see how the characters are reacting to one another. The real humor in that scene is the fact that John is going on about this very serious thing and I'm just kind of sitting there, eating french fries. The pay-off comes when you cut to close-ups of each of us. They are square-

on, looking-right-into-the-lens close-ups. John's character says, 'You seem like a deep thinker.' And I say, 'I was just thinking about wanting some more of these french fries.'

That makes it so much funnier. When he asks me questions, that means he needs information from me. In that instance, I want to see my character from John's POV, so I cut to a close-up of myself. I wanted to show exactly what he sees when I deliver this absurd line. Then I cut back to his reaction.

Barry said that you asked him to watch *High Noon* and *The Searchers* before starting work on *All the Pretty Horses*.

Thornton: *High Noon* is my favorite movie — more for emotional and spiritual reasons, humanistic reasons, than for filmmaking reasons. *The Searchers* is a great story and it has a great look. Also, the movie goes on for awhile; it takes you over a period of time. If I came to a studio with *The Searchers* today, they'd tell me I was insane.

Those two movies are beautiful. I wanted Barry to see *High Noon* mainly for the mood, and *The Searchers* for both the mood and the look.

Is there a sequence in *All the Pretty Horses* that you're particularly proud of?

Thornton: The opening of the movie. The book describes horses running, and I wanted them to be kind of ghost horses. I told Barry I wanted them to sort of appear out of the earth as if they were ghosts rising from the dead. We got a great shot.

A couple of our buddies came to town to help out on that shot. Jack Green [ASC] came down for one night, just to shoot that opening sequence, and Fred Murphy [ASC] — with whom Barry had started his career in the business — came down to do some second-unit photography. We had a great night of shooting horses. That sequence sets the mood for the whole film. ■

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The Way of the West

in four days does turn Alejandra's pretty head, it cuts no ice with her great aunt, an intimidating woman who is unimpressed by young Grady. One day, she sits the boy down in her imposing parlor and makes it very clear that Alejandra is not the girl for him. "That was a dark scene in a dark room," Markowitz says, "but it was lit by slashes of cold, white sunlight through the windows. I slashed the room with two 6K Pars through 8-by-8 sailcloth pointed through the windows — low light across the big table where they're sitting, and low across their chests. I hit the aunt's face very hard with a Par, overexposing her by two stops. Grady's face was normal because the slashed light hit his chest, which was overexposed." Inside the parlor, a 2.5K HMI Par brought details out of the dark background, and a foamcore fill card was occasionally used to reflect some keylight onto the actors' faces.

Despite her great-aunt's disapproval, Alejandra falls in love with Grady. "Even though [the love scene] was a romantic night interior, I used a lot of light because I always needed depth of field. I pointed a 4K HMI Par with a blue gel through one small window right onto their faces — it was so bright it was hard to look at. The trick was to keep the light off the wall and maintain the proper exposure ratios."

Later in the story, tragic events overtake the main characters when they stop at a small pueblo and are reunited with Blevins. Grady and Rawlins get into serious trouble with the Mexican police, who haul them off to prison. The scene was shot at the Zia Indian Reservation in New Mexico. The pueblo interior was lit by a single, diffused 18K aimed through a window, and white bounce cards inside the tiny room provided fill for the actors' faces. "We did that scene in two days, and for the exterior stuff, we got nothing but clouds," Markowitz remembers happily. "The police drag Blevins off

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The Way of the West



Grady engages in a tense round of billiards at his sweetheart's Mexican hacienda home.

into the brush while Grady and Rawlins are kept back under guard. We simply used ambient daylight, because I wanted the lighting to be as unobtrusive as possible."

Not long after that, Grady and Rawlins find themselves in a nightmarish Mexican prison, where Grady is forced to fight for his life in the mess hall. These sequences were

filmed in an abandoned New Mexico prison that was redressed as an enormous Mexican penitentiary from the late 1940s. Markowitz hung 1K Fresnels, Peppers and Inkies from the high ceiling. He lit the aisle leading to the mess hall by hanging a dozen dimmer-controlled foamcore box lights, each capable of holding five 211 Photoflood bulbs, at regular

intervals along the aisle ceiling. "I must have used 25 small lights for the prison-mess fight," he says. "They walked through it, and we lit the areas where the action would happen. It was all toplit, and I didn't have much exposure on their faces, so I shot at T4 or T5.6. We used two cameras with prime lenses all the time — in fact, 95 percent of the movie was shot with primes."

By the end of the film, Grady's journey has made him a man, but he's collected some heavy regrets along the way. Hope appears in the form of a kindly judge (Bruce Dern), who offers some wise counsel and helps him learn from his experiences. Grady meets the judge in a courtroom, and Markowitz lit the day interior with Musco lights aimed through the windows. Outside, he covered the top half of the windows with silks and moved the lights far away from the building. "The

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Muscos were practically out of the neighborhood!" he says. "That way, I could clearly see the difference in the courtroom between the hard-light and soft-light areas. The 'silked' light carried from the top of the room down to the actors' shoulders, so their faces were softened. From the shoulders down we had hard, natural-sun type light. [There were] no lights in the courtroom. We were keeping the shots wide for maximum depth of field, and the last thing I needed was to see a piece of equipment in the frame!"

At the end of *All the Pretty Horses*, Grady rides off into the sunset in classic Western style. "That was an important shot, so we waited until the light was just right," Markowitz notes. "We wanted [to shoot from] dusk to night, just after sunset, and we kept doing takes, knowing one of them was going to look great. [It was] all natural light,



with the camera on a tripod. I kept shooting until there was nothing on the meter with the stop wide open, and then we shot even more."

Markowitz sums up his 15-week ride on the show as another happy outing with Thornton, and he praises Steadicam operator Jerry Holoway, gaffer John Wagner and first AD Jim Hensz for their work on

the film. "Billy's a leader and a real mensch," he says. "Working with him on three movies in the last five years has been just perfect. He's a great director and writer who gives his crew the chance to show what we can do."

Determined to keep Grady and Alejandra apart, her family sends her away. Here, Grady and Rawlins (Henry Thomas) watch Alejandra's plane depart.

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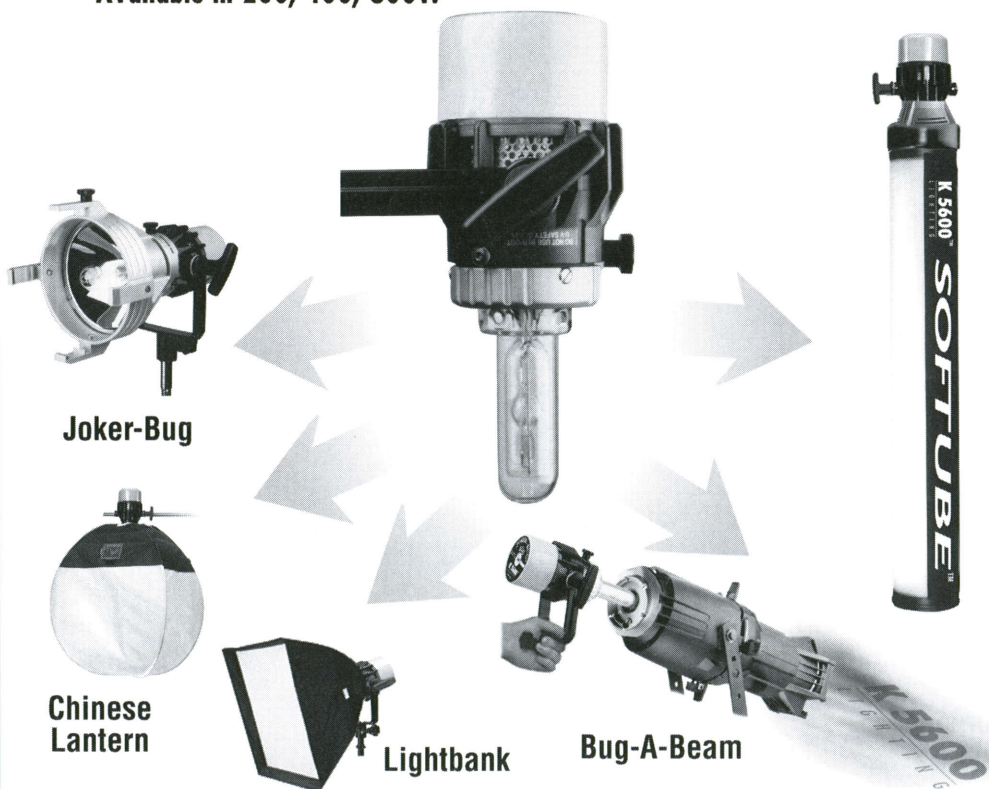
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Saving Film History



A new sense of urgency, along with modern digital techniques, might spur the preservation and restoration of classic motion pictures, but for many films, it's already too late.

by Eric Rudolph

A perusal of any store's DVD racks might lead one to conclude that the field of film preservation and restoration is booming. Thanks to DVDs, movies seen for years only in panned, scanned and faded versions on VHS tapes suddenly leap to life in sharp, clean color in their original aspect ratios. More people are being exposed to great old films that haven't looked this good since the day they premiered. What could be wrong with that?

The problem is that the DVD explosion is actually working against the goals of film preservationists and restorers, according to experts Robert

Harris and James Katz, who have proven their *bona fides* over the past 15 years by meticulously restoring and preserving *Rear Window*, *Vertigo*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *My Fair Lady* and *Spartacus*. Harris and Katz have become known for their self-described "doom-and-gloom" vision of the state of film preservation and restoration, but they recently told *AC* that the situation is worse than even they have previously maintained.

The two assert that in some cases, whenever we see a rich-looking DVD of an old film, the overwhelming likelihood is that nothing has been done to save or restore the film's original negative. "We've been trying to define 'restoration' for years, and everyone has his own ideas," says Katz, adding that what is typically called a restoration seldom qualifies under the definition that he and Harris accept. According to Harris, even a film that is said to be restored and then released theatrically "may be nothing more than a new dupe" from an old intermediate film element.

Harris and Katz assert that the root of the problem is that the term "restoration" has become a marketing tool, thanks to the ascent of the DVD and the proliferation of cable-

television movie channels. "The [studio] libraries are now being driven by the DVD and cable markets, and [while] things look great [on a television screen], usually nothing's been done to restore or preserve the original camera negative," says Harris. Such negatives of many important and beloved classic films are "not even printable," he adds.

The primary problem is that for as little as \$35,000, a studio can copy a negative or pre-print film element by running it through a telecine and processing the video images with software that removes defects. The result is a "really good-looking video element," Harris explains.

On the other hand, he continues, a studio can spend between \$40,000 and several million dollars to make "restored pre-print film elements" derived from the original camera negative and other materials. The resulting film prints might not look as good as a digitally enhanced and less expensive video transfer, but by making the restored intermediate film element from the original negative first, "they save the film," Harris emphasizes. Time after time, however, these restored film elements are not made.

"As long as home video is driving the libraries, original negatives are going to be neglected," says Harris, adding that this is because film libraries are simply not being given the funds they need to save older negatives. Studios, he says, "will do the minimum they can do" to make transfers for DVDs.

Katz submits that this situation will not improve unless restorations are handled in the manner that he and Harris employed on *Vertigo*. The entire VistaVision 8-perf 35mm camera negative of that film was faded, but the team restored the color to a new 8-perf film element "with about 80 percent success," according to Katz. The duo accomplished this

by manipulating the gamma to adjust the faded yellow layer. "We then printed the new 8-perf version to 70mm so the VistaVision image size would be preserved, and we also made preservation materials," he says. (The DVD made from their restoration contains an audio commentary by Harris and Katz, in which they detail the technical steps they took during the job.)

It cost about \$1.5 million to restore and preserve *Vertigo*, and Harris and Katz maintain that this is much more money than studios are

because it will look better than a print made from the original, damaged negative? Yes. Is it the best thing you can do for the film? No."

Harris and Katz maintain that more radical steps, such as the costly gamma-adjustment approach they used on *Vertigo*, are the answer. "Many negatives of films made from 1954 until about 1961 are either lightly faded or already fully faded," Katz says. "The Kodak stock used during that period — 5248, 5250 and 5251 — have all gotten progressively worse, especially the 48. *The Man*



typically willing to spend to restore even their most treasured titles. They add that time is running out for many significant films. Harris recently examined the negative of "a major film" and found that it had not only faded, but that "material that was cut into the negative is destroying it more." He explains, "To restore this film digitally would cost over \$2 million, as opposed to \$300,000 to put it together from the black-and-white separations. Using the separations, you can get a grainier, higher-contrast image with a loss of shadow detail. Can you get an acceptable image from the separations and say the film is restored

Who Knew Too Much, released in 1965, has fading throughout the entire negative and cannot be printed to derive anything usable.

"There are important films that are really dying now, and 20 years from now they'll be gone," Katz warns. "Your grandchildren are not going to be able to go to a movie theater and see films like Academy Award-winner *Around the World in 80 Days* [1956], which cannot be printed from the negative."

Harris argues that *North by Northwest*, which enjoyed a theatrical re-release last year, "does not exist as a commercially printable film at this time, although there are some who

Opposite: A bad guy takes aim in *Hell's Hinges*, a 1916 Western made in black-and-white and color. The film now resides in the archive at New York's Museum of Modern Art. This page: A soldier prepares to toss a grenade in the 1945 documentary *The Battle of San Pietro*.

Saving Film History



Top: Blacksmiths toil away in this scene from 1893 footage, now housed in the MoMA archive.

Bottom: *The Chechahcos*, a 1924 independent feature shot entirely in Alaska, survives in the University of Alaska-Fairbanks' Alaska Film Archive.

will disagree." He says that the film cannot currently be printed from the original negative and achieve results any more robust than the re-released version, which was printed from an internegative made more than 10 years ago. "That certainly did not look like the dye-transfer prints people saw in theaters in 1959," he opines.

Richard May, vice president for film preservation at Warner Bros., explains, "The negative [of *North by Northwest*] was faded, and we tried to

adjust the gamma to regain the yellow layer, but it didn't work." As a result, the older internegative was used. "The original negative needs to be restored digitally, and that would have cost millions of dollars," May admits.

Certain films are so popular that it clearly makes good economic sense for a studio to spend millions of dollars to restore them. "If you're Disney, you can make a \$7 million investment in digitally restoring *Snow White* and know that it will

have a new audience every seven years," Harris notes. But the likelihood of films such as *Ben Hur* or *North by Northwest* recouping the cost of a film-element restoration through re-release is less certain. "You can make the costs back on the theatrical run if the re-release is marketed as a major event," Katz says, adding that studios seem unwilling to take that approach.

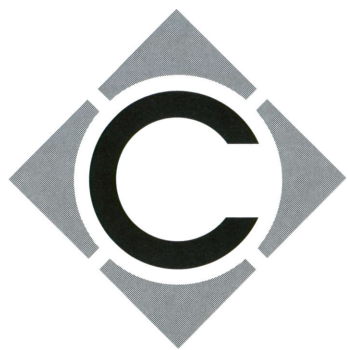
Complicating the matter further is the shortage of facilities that can actually complete a proper restoration. "You can count the Los Angeles facilities that can do professional-grade archival work on one hand," Katz says. No matter how much money is set aside for restoration, "you still can't do more than a few dozen films a year. We just don't have the infrastructure."

Harris and Katz are also determined to correct the record about what actually happened to the huge number of films that are truly lost forever. "The American Film Institute keeps saying that 90 percent of the films made before 1950 have been lost," Katz notes. "[That statement] is correct but misleading. Where did they go? Did they deteriorate? Were they lost?" In many cases, he says, "the studios killed them" by simply getting rid of their oldest films when film-storage vaults were declared full.

When old films weren't simply thrown out, steps taken to preserve them were often woefully inadequate or wrongheaded and harmful, according to Harris and Katz. For example, they explain, one studio that needed to save vault space had many three-strip Technicolor film negatives transferred to Color Reversal Internegative (CRI) stock. CRI was popular in the late Sixties and early Seventies before internegative and interpositive processes were improved, because CRI allowed producers to go directly from original negative to dupe negative. (A

Continued on page 108





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GLIMPSES OF THE PAST

The film restorations that are currently underway are not restricted to Hollywood features — museums, libraries and archives have also begun restoring and blowing up 8mm and 16mm “home movies” with historical value. “It is becoming evident that a lot of America’s history of the past 50 to 60 years is lying around in closets,” says Balasz Nyari of Cineric Inc. in New

American National Museum’s request, Cineric built a full-immersion 8mm liquid gate and bought a full-immersion Super 8 liquid gate from Oxberry. “With these tools, home movies can be blown up to 16mm or 35mm, complete with additive color and full optical printing — the same services you would get on a VistaVision or CinemaScope job,” Nyari says. “There is a lot of

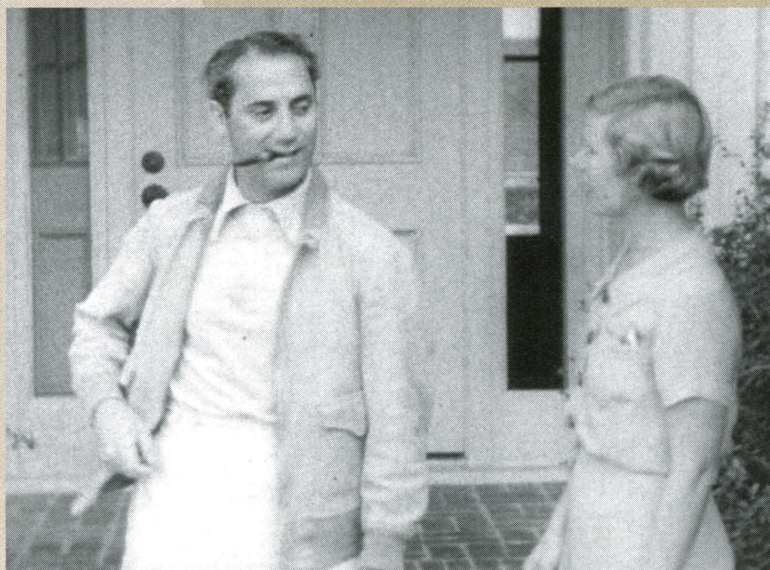
save America’s film heritage. The NFPP focuses on helping American film archives rescue endangered films that are not preserved by commercial interests.”

Melville reports that there is a lot of good news on this front. “This orphan material was hardly even thought about a decade ago. If people [considered] non-commercial film restoration 10 years ago, they thought only of the venerable founders of the field, such as the Museum of Modern Art [MoMA], The Library of Congress, George Eastman House in Rochester, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Archive and the UCLA Film and Television Archive. Now, as scholarly interest and public demand increase, people are looking beyond those institutions and finding a lot more orphan films. Our job is to help the archives, museums and historical societies take care of these unknown treasures.”

The foundation’s work is well represented on the DVD boxed set *Treasures From the American Film Archives: 50 Preserved Films* (see review in DVD Playback, page 16). The collection makes an important distinction between films that are transferred only to video and films that have been archivally preserved to film. The *Treasures* set includes *The Chechahcos* (1924), an independent feature produced entirely in Alaska that Melville says “shows the vitality of the independent-feature business that extended into the mid-1920s. It has a dog-sled chase scene, and the villain falls off a glacier at the end — it’s a hokey but well-executed melodrama!”

Other important films not represented in the *Treasures* set are still being restored, thanks to funding from the NFPP. These include independent-cinema pioneer Oscar Micheaux’s film *Symbol of the Unconquered* (1920), which is being worked on by MoMA. Like other Micheaux films, *Symbol* is a story

Groucho Marx relaxes at home in this 1933 scene from his home movies, which reside at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History.



York. “There is a lot of precious footage out there.”

Nyari notes that Cineric’s technicians are now working on almost two hours of 8mm and 16mm black-and-white and color-reversal footage of World War II Japanese-American internment camps, which are being blown up at the request of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles. He adds that “we’re also hoping to get the Zapruder film [8mm footage of John F. Kennedy’s assassination] to blow up one more time, as well as the Richard Nixon home-library material, which is in Super 8 Ektachrome.”

To accommodate the Japanese

fantastic historical footage out there. Can you imagine [how fascinating it would be] if you could somehow get footage detailing an hour and a half of Julius Caesar’s real life, blown up to 35mm?”

Whereas the restoration prospects for high-profile Hollywood features appear to be grim, the restoration of so-called “orphan films” is actually generating a good deal of interest. Largely responsible for that process is the San Francisco-based National Film Preservation Foundation (NFPP), which was created by Congress. According to foundation director Annette Melville, the NFPP has a mandate “to

about a black homesteader's struggle to survive on the harsh plains of the Midwest. (For more information on Oscar Micheaux's work, see *Points East*, AC March '00).

The NFPF is also active in the restoration of documentaries and amateur and home-movie material. "The battle 20 years ago was largely focused on studio films," Melville notes. "Now that people are seeing the wide panorama of American filmmaking, it [has become] a much broader front. There is much more variety and diversity in American filmmaking when you factor in what amateurs and documentarians were doing across the country. It is exciting to think about what's out there — the problem is getting the information out to [people and] organizations so they can take care of their films properly."

Small-gauge home movies are "a burgeoning area of interest," she adds. "A lot of history was documented only in home movies." One example she cites is a current University of Mississippi project that the NFPF is supporting: the restoration of the 8mm and 16mm black-and-white film collection of Emma Lytle, an active amateur filmmaker whose family owned two Mississippi Delta plantations. Melville says Lytle photographed agricultural work, domestic tasks and celebrations in both the black and white communities from 1938-1941.

"People are waking up to the value of this historical material," Melville concludes. "Of course, you'll find hundreds of birthday parties [among home movies], but there is also some unique material out there, and its rescue and preservation present a real challenge."

— Eric Rudolph

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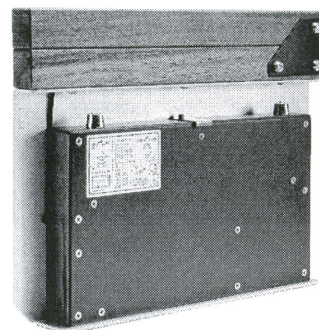
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Saving Film History



A dramatic moment unfolds in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, a 1928 film that is housed at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York.

negative copied to reversal stock would yield a negative, without the need for the additional generation loss of an interpositive.) Following the transfer to CRI, the original three-strip Technicolor negatives were destroyed. However, it wasn't widely known at that time that CRI had a shelf life of only five to seven years; as a result, this supposed preservation technique led to the loss of many color-film treasures.

CRI stock was also used extensively to save generation loss in visual-effects composites, and Katz says that all of the original effects shots in *Star Wars*, *Superman* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* have been lost. "All effects in films from the late 1960s to the early 1980s are gone if they were on CRI," he says. Harris adds that the use of CRI for effects work is what motivated the digital restoration of the *Star Wars* trilogy (see AC Feb. '97).

Universal Studios, which Harris and Katz say is one of the few studios taking a proactive approach to preservation and restoration, is quite proud of its commitment. Bob O'Neil, Universal's executive director of preservation and vault services, says the studio gives him and his staff of six the freedom to work on what-

ever films need help, starting with those most in jeopardy. Almost every title has been restored, is in the process of being restored, or is scheduled for restoration, he adds. According to O'Neil, the staff works with original negatives if at all possible, and they use pre-print materials only after using the negative has been completely ruled out.

All new Universal releases are copied from the original negatives to black-and-white separation masters, and then intermediate elements and answer prints are made. All of the materials are stored at 34°F and 25 percent humidity. O'Neil notes that the library's material would be in much better shape now if the industry had known 30 or even 15 years ago what it now knows about storage conditions. "Fifteen years ago, the industry specifications called for storage at 50° and 50 percent humidity," he reveals.

O'Neil is currently overseeing a complete digital restoration of *To Kill A Mockingbird*. "We're working at a per-frame resolution of between 2K and 4K," he explains. Plans call for re-outputting the data to 35mm film via a film recorder.

At Warner Bros., May explains, every new film is copied in

a manner similar to Universal's. The studio's vault policy is "to protect the library." Any old film stored in the vault that has not already been copied to black-and-white separations is scheduled for this process. The separations are printed to an answer print and two interpositives, one of which is stored and the other of which is kept on hand for home video use. All film elements are stored at the recommended temperature and humidity levels.

May is excited about the new home-video version of *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950), which he says has been out of circulation for 27 years. The home-video film master was made from the film's original three-strip Technicolor negatives. A 35mm print was struck for a special industry screening, but there are no plans for theatrical re-release. On the big screen, May says with pride, "*Annie Get Your Gun* looks like it was made yesterday."

Balazs Nyari, head of Cineric Inc. in New York City, maintains that once digital tools are improved and the cost of digital processing comes down, technicians will be able to restore films to 4K resolution on a widespread basis.

He cites the work of Rhode Island's Mathematical Technologies, Inc., which he says develops user-friendly film-restoration software, as well as other firms around the world that are working on software that will facilitate automation of the restoration process. Nyari contends that film restoration must become a highly automated process in order for it to be practical. "There is no way to do [large numbers of films] frame-by-frame; you need automation to knock off 90 to 99 percent of the work before doing the rest by hand. Scratch, dirt removal and steadiness corrections are [now] almost automated at 2K resolution, and a lot of these and other functions are coming online." ■



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Man With a Camera

Chameleonic actor Lon Chaney, Hollywood's "Man of a Thousand Faces," made a plethora of home movies that revealed the person behind the disguises.

by Michael F. Blake



In the early 1920s, a man who was about to step on a spider might well be cautioned by a friend, "Don't step on that spider! It might be Lon Chaney!" This good-natured joke, which was in widespread circulation for nearly a decade, is symbolic of the fascination the movie-going public held for a chameleon-like actor who became one of the world's top motion-picture attractions. Chaney's uncanny ability to alter his visage in such movies as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *Phantom of the Opera* garnered him the sobriquet "The Man of a Thousand Faces."

In addition to being a pioneer in the field of motion-picture makeup, Chaney was also one of the first celebrities to indulge in the hobby of home movies. Long before entertainer Ken Murray made home movies a popular subject, Chaney was quietly recording shots of fellow performers, visiting dignitaries, family members and wildlife from his trips into the Sierras. He once boasted, "The best thing I do is thread my camera on horseback."

In a 1930 *American Cinematographer* article, Chaney claimed

Photos courtesy of Michael F. Blake.

claimed that his interest in home movies began when he wanted to create a personal record of the various dignitaries who visited MGM studios, where he reigned as a major star. Chaney naturally felt that home movies were the logical way to record such events, and he began his hobby with a 16mm Filmo camera. From that point on, the actor was hooked. Chaney eventually bought a tri-speed Victor camera, whose lens turret he found invaluable for photographing wildlife, and he also had a Graflex still camera. However, he lamented, "I don't give the poor thing much of a chance. I usually carry both of my movie cameras with me, and between the two of them I seldom have time to think of stills until it's too late to get any!"

In 1925, 16mm cameras were beginning to be marketed to the public for personal use. At that time, a major film star using a movie camera in public could cause quite a commotion. Loren Harbert recalled just that type of situation, when Chaney and his wife were visiting his grandfather in Seattle, Washington. "The neighbors were curious [about] the fairly new and fancy car that my grandfather's guests drove. And then when Lon filmed the family out on the front lawn with his new 16mm camera, everyone got interested in who this person was. Nobody had anything like that. It was quite a thing to see in those days, and to top it off, Lon Chaney was staying right in their neighborhood!"

Aside from filming the traditional family events, Chaney turned his camera lens on his co-workers, often taking his camera to work to capture events on the sets of his films. One of the more famous personalities he caught off-guard during a visit to the studio was Prince William of Sweden. This moment was also captured by still photographers and the studio's newsreel cameramen. A brief clip of footage exists that shows Chaney in his khaki uniform from



Tell It to the Marines (1927), holding his camera and filming a group of men as he walks towards them. A tighter shot reveals the actor holding his camera and displaying it to Prince William and Prince Gustav of Denmark as studio boss Louis B. Mayer looks on. It was during this visit that Chaney sparked Prince William's interest in home movies, and the actor presented the distinguished visitor with a Filmo camera of his own.

Chaney also introduced another well-known personality to the budding hobby of home movies: General Smedley Butler of the U.S. Marine Corps. The two men became close friends during the production of *Tell It to the Marines*, and Butler's son, Thomas, recalled, "One time Lon Chaney came over to our house [at the San Diego Marine base] with his 16mm film camera and had Dad shoot some film of the two of us on

the front lawn." When Butler left to command the Marine detachment in China, Chaney presented him with a 35mm DeVry camera as a gift.

During a 1928 visit to New York City, Chaney spent one day as a typical tourist, photographing various sights with his Filmo camera. When he arrived at City Hall to meet Mayor Jimmy Walker, a large crowd assembled outside as word spread of his appearance. Upon leaving the building, the crowd remained quiet — remarkably unlike the usual New York crowd, which would try to make personal contact with a celebrity. Only a few bold newsboys attempted to be familiar with the actor, leading a cheer as his car pulled away. Chaney stood up in his limousine and filmed the crowd as he departed.

Probably the most unique aspect of Chaney's celluloid collection, and the one of which he was proudest, was the vast amount of

Opposite page: Between takes on *While the City Sleeps* (1928), Chaney uses his 16mm Filmo to capture scenes on the set. Jack Conway (seated, left) directs, while cinematographer Henry Sharp, ASC (at right, leaning against tripod) observes the action. **This page:** Chaney, the "Man of a Thousand Faces," with his famous makeup case in 1922.

Man With a Camera



During production of *Tell It to the Marines* (1927) at the U.S. Marine Corps base in San Diego, Chaney photographs William Haines (front row, third from left) and the rest of the troops. Meanwhile, Sgt. H.H. Hopple (next to Chaney) speaks to director George Hill (left) and actor Eddie Gribbon.

wildlife footage. Between pictures, he would spend weeks fishing and hunting in the Eastern Sierras, but he later told *American Cinematographer* that the skill required to “bag” an animal with a gun was nothing compared to using a camera. He once said that the most difficult subjects to photograph weren’t mountain lions, but hummingbirds, because of their rapid movement. The actor had just completed a full reel of these tiny creatures shortly before his death in 1930.

Sadly, Chaney’s home movies have all but disappeared. The actor’s grandson, Lon Ralph Chaney (the son of Lon Chaney, Jr.), recalled finding a large quantity of film in his father’s garage in the late 1960s, but it had suffered considerable damage from years of exposure to water and

the elements, and was therefore trashed. However, in 1991, home movies surfaced from the collection of Chaney’s longtime friend William Dunphy, allowing film historians and Chaney fans a rare glimpse at the man behind the thousand faces. These films show Chaney and his wife, Hazel, vacationing with the Dunphys at Saboba Springs, California, and at Saratoga. We also see Chaney playfully pick up his dog Sandy, a wire-haired terrier, by the tail, and kiss Hazel while hiding behind his cap. Then, in a very ham-like fashion, Chaney picks a bud from a tree and pretends to eat it. Another sequence shows the Chaneys and the Dunphys at the Chaneys’ Beverly Hills home, where they play with Sandy in the backyard. Later, Lon playfully tickles Hazel, taking off her

shoes to show her tiny feet to the camera. She then attempts to enlist the aid of Sandy to “attack” Chaney, but the dog fails to even get up from where he sits.

Interestingly, Chaney used title cards in his home movies to help the viewer follow what was going on. In one sequence, we see him preparing to film some of these title cards and demonstrating to a visitor how they work. We also are privy to the only known footage of the actor and his son, Creighton (later known as Lon Chaney, Jr.), who appear together in this film during a family gathering.

Chaney’s knowledge of the camera was by no means limited to home movies. He was one of the few stars at that time who were extremely knowledgeable about various cameras and how proper lighting

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Man With a Camera

Top: During their visit to the MGM studio in 1926, Prince William of Sweden (left) and Prince Gustav of Denmark (center) were caught on film by Chaney and his 16mm Filmo. This brief meeting sparked Prince William's interest in home movies. Bottom: Chaney shows a family friend the title cards he used in his home movies. Hazel Chaney stands in the background.



could enhance a particular shot. From his years on the stage, he knew that lighting would either help or ruin a good makeup creation. He once said that the key to the success of his makeup for *Phantom of the Opera* was attributable to the placement of the right shades of greasepaint in the right places — including some on the less obvious areas of the face.

By the late 1920s, Chaney was acknowledged for his expertise on

the subject of makeup and lighting, and he even authored a paper on the effects of makeup under incandescent lighting. He was very exacting when it came to doing makeup tests, something he'd learned early in his film career. While at Universal Studios in the early teens, Chaney had cinematographer Virgil Miller, ASC secure a camera to film various kinds of makeup so he could judge which makeup techniques would be acceptable on the orthochromatic

film stock. A brief film clip from a makeup test for *Road to Mandalay* (1926) still exists, giving us a hint of what Chaney looked for during these tests. James Wong Howe, ASC remembered how the actor was acutely aware of the camera when they worked together on *Laugh, Clown, Laugh* (1928): "He was the only actor I knew [who] could stand in front of the camera, and no matter what lens I told him I put on the camera, he could give me the side-lines at any distance from the camera. He knew exactly."

Whether it was in his performances, makeup tests or his knowledge of cameras and lighting, Chaney brought an absolute perfection to the task that helped escalate him to the status of screen legend. But his home movies paint a different picture. The actor who refused to sign autographs, give interviews or attend movie premieres suddenly appears to be an everyday Joe. He is no longer the deformed bell ringer of Notre Dame or the haunting phantom of the Paris Opera. In these home movies, Chaney is the man who refused the studio's pleas to work late, allowing the extras to earn an additional day's pay; the movie star who handed out gift certificates at Christmas to all of the studio employees; and the fellow who climbed a tree on the studio lot to place some baby birds back in their nest, begging a fellow actress not to tell anyone. In a rare interview, he once claimed that "between pictures, there is no Lon Chaney." But as the surviving home movies prove, there was indeed a man behind the thousand faces who was just as interesting and real as any of his screen characterizations. ■

Michael F. Blake, an Emmy Award-winning makeup artist, is the author of three books on Lon Chaney.

Short Takes

A Reluctant Rock Star

by **Stephanie Argy**



The video for the Wallflowers song "Sleepwalker" features Jakob Dylan, the band's lead singer, in a series of vignettes that illustrate the strange life of a rock star.

According to cinematographer Jeff Cronenweth, the basic idea behind the Wallflowers' "Sleepwalker" video was to make fun of being a rock star. The band's lead singer, Jakob Dylan, is known for being reclusive, and the video plays off the irony of a rock star who recoils from fame.

"Sleepwalker" consists of a series of vignettes comprising key moments from a rock star's life. In each vignette, the camera pulls back or zooms out, turning the scene into a spoof of itself. In many cases, the entire scene turns out to have been some sort of fake; in one scene, for example, Dylan stands in front of a beautiful sunset that turns out to be nothing more than a TransLite.

The director of the video was

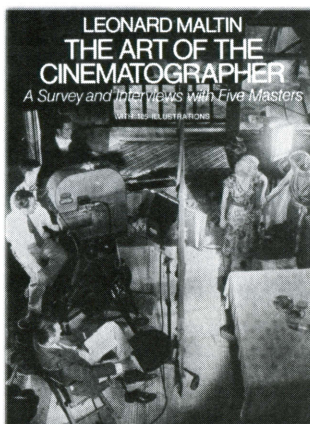
Mark Romanek, who has frequently teamed with Cronenweth. The two are now shooting the feature *One-Hour Photo* starring Robin Williams, and in the past they've created videos for such artists as the Eels, Weezer and Nine Inch Nails. This year, Cronenweth won MTV's Best Cinematography Award for Macy Gray's "Do Something" video, another project on which he and Romanek collaborated.

Cronenweth says Romanek often brings in reference images to convey the style and look he wants for a particular project. "He's very good about doing his homework," the cinematographer says. In the case of "Sleepwalker," the images Romanek showed Cronenweth were mainly photographs of rock musicians

from the 1960s, including one of Jakob Dylan's father, Bob Dylan, surrounded by paparazzi.

For the video's paparazzi vignette, Cronenweth used anamorphic lenses on a 35mm Panavision Panastar camera. "We wanted a little less of the coating, and we wanted the horizontal flares that you won't get with a spherical lens," he explains. The anamorphic image was later unsqueezed in telecine, stretching the flares into long horizontal streaks.

In all the other sequences, Cronenweth used spherical lenses — mostly zooms, to facilitate pulling out of the various scenes and revealing the wider settings. "We used a shorter zoom — a 17.5-75mm 4:1 Primo — for some dolly-zoom compound shots," he says.



THE ART OF THE CINEMATOGRAPHER

A Survey and Interviews
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- Conrad Hall, ASC
In Cold Blood, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid

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For performance footage designed to mimic a famous photo of the Beatles, cinematographer Jeff Cronenweth used 50Ks as hard key light on one side of the musicians, then filled the other side with light from a Kino Flo Bag-O-Lite.

"To do some snap-zooms, we used an 11:1 [24-275] Primo zoom as well."

Cronenweth's film stock on the video was Kodak Vision 500T 5279, which he describes as "a fast, contrasty stock that allows a lot of latitude." In addition to helping compensate for the slower anamorphic lenses, the stock's extra speed was especially useful for the paparazzi sequence: "I tried to play out the scene entirely with strobe lighting and shot at 60 frames per second."

According to Cronenweth, Romanek is an innovator who likes to be to be among the first to try out new equipment. Because the "Sleepwalker" video was shot shortly after Showbiz Expo, where many companies introduce new gear, Cronenweth and Romanek used the job to try out some lights they'd seen at the trade show. One was an umbrella light called the Briese light, which is made by a French company. According to Cronenweth, Briese lights are focusable soft lights used primarily for still photography. The largest available unit measures 11' across, though the biggest in the United States at the time of the Wallflowers shoot was only 7' across. "We thought [it would be great] to photograph that," Cronenweth says. In fact, the light actually appears onscreen in one of the vignettes.

Another piece of equipment Cronenweth and Romanek tried after its appearance at Showbiz Expo was the Bag-O-Lite, a German light that the production rented through Kino Flo. "It's a

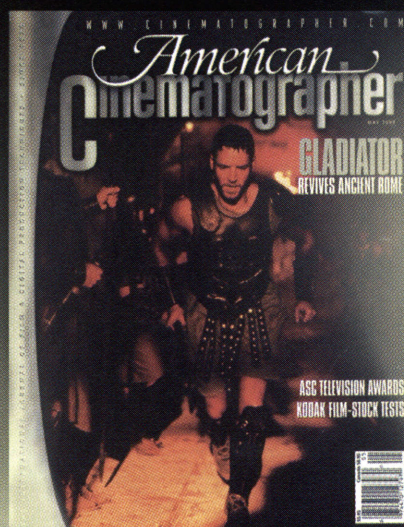
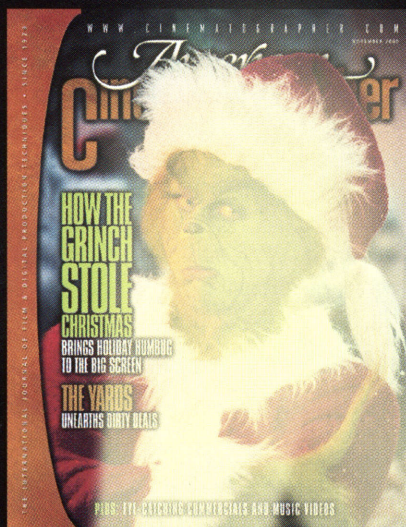
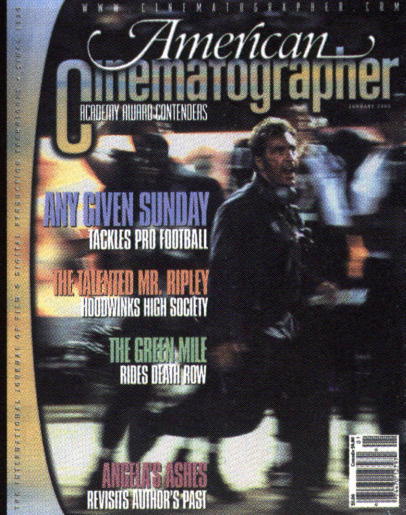
4K HMI light that has an inflatable sock protruding from it," Cronenweth details. A tank of compressed air blows into the sock so that it fills up and stiffens into a giant illuminated cylinder, and it becomes "like an 18-foot Kino Flo!" the cinematographer enthuses.

According to Ed Maloney, Cronenweth's gaffer, the Bag-O-Lites were positioned end to end. For a scene in which the light from the tube needed to be warmed up, the entire tube had to be gelled. "You can't gel between the light and the unit," Maloney says. "It's too hot."

Cronenweth also combined the Bag-O-Lite with 50K Soft Sun lights from Lightning Strikes for performance footage in the video. "Mark had remembered seeing some early Beatles photo where the light was hitting them, but the photographer had underexposed them," says Cronenweth. The result was a line of light that ran along the side of the musicians' faces. To re-create that look, Cronenweth and Maloney used the 50Ks as a hard key light on one side of the musicians, then filled the other side with light from the Bag-O-Lite. According to Maloney, the ratio between the two sides was about 3:1.

The paparazzi vignette was lit primarily with Norman 400B strobe lights to simulate flashes from the photographers' cameras. Maloney reveals that the lights were placed to the left and right of the scene, above and below camera.

Cronenweth used no filtration on



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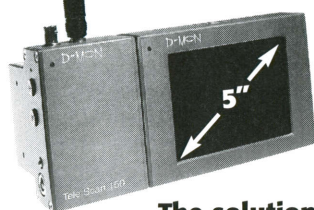
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The animals appearing with Dylan in this scene were filmed onstage during the shoot, but they were added to the scene as separate shots so that director Mark Romanek could place them where he wanted them.

the camera because he knows that Romanek likes to manipulate imagery in post. "He comes from the school of really clean images," says Cronenweth. "He doesn't want to get handcuffed in." In this case, Romanek did indeed want to make some changes after the shoot, and he turned to the visual-effects company A52 to do work that is mostly invisible in the finished product. Dan Sumpter, a visual-effects supervisor at A52, recalls that Romanek "brought us a whole group of things that he wanted us to polish. There are often quite a few things that he likes to do after the fact to perfect the promo."

Much of the work involved cosmetic touches that raised the look of the video to Romanek's standards. "We went through and did quite a lot of massaging and combining of images," says Sumpter. "Mark tends to go with very clean imagery." Shots of young women behind a shop window, for example, were retouched to hide seams and handprints.

One sequence in the video shows Dylan in a room decorated in a baroque style, surrounded by several live animals. Although the animals were filmed onstage during the shoot, their performances were not quite what Romanek had in mind. "Animals being animals, they don't always act the way you want them to," says Sumpter. "[In] the shots where you see [Dylan] on the couch, we were adding separate shots of animals so that the animals 'behaved' and were

placed where [Romanek] wanted them." Although a horse is onscreen throughout this sequence, the animal actually wasn't filmed in the first shot of the series — a camera pullback — and Romanek asked A52 to insert it. "That was probably one of the trickier shots," says Sumpter, who had to track the camera move and apply that information to the image of the horse.

Sumpter used a Quantel Infinity to complete the work. "In terms of postproduction tools, it's quite old," he says. "Its very simplicity is one of its strengths, though. It's still a very easy, intuitive box to use."

Though Cronenweth now enjoys a burgeoning career in feature-film cinematography, he says he's grateful for the work he's been able to do on music videos — and for the opportunity to see that part of the industry evolve and become more respected. "It was fun to watch [the realm of music videos] mature and grow," he says. "My jobs continually got better. The ideas became less about watching someone sing, and more conceptual in style." Even now, he adds, he still finds videos exciting to film. "You get the opportunity to use toys, be extremely bold and discover how far you can actually push the limit. You're always out there trying something that hasn't been done." ■

New Products & Services

compiled by Douglas Bankston

Cold Storage

Kodak has opened the new Pro-Tek Media Preservation Center in Burbank, California. A state-of-the-art film and video preservation vault and film inspection center designed to safeguard valuable motion pictures and television content for posterity, Pro-Tek has the capacity to store some 600,000 film and video elements in a safe and secure environment. The vaults satisfy stringent ANSI standards that are intended to extend the life of motion picture film for as long as 500 years.

"This new facility is an important component of a concerted effort to help our customers safeguard valuable and often irreplaceable films for future audiences and historians," says Rick Utley, vice president of Pro-Tek Preservation Services for the Kodak subsidiary Cinesite, Inc. "Most studios now consider the assets in their film libraries as currency for the future. During the 1980s, the VCR significantly increased the value of older films. Today, it is the DVD player. Tomorrow's format will have a digital base and mandate a higher quality level for home entertainment use. More than ever, content holders need to preserve the cornerstone media universal for all formats – which is film."

The new facility encompasses three medium-term storage vaults where film is maintained at 45 degrees Fahrenheit and 25 percent relative humidity. Video is stored at 50 degrees Fahrenheit and 35 percent humidity. Film stored in this environment will last several hundred years with little base degradation or color fade.

The first Pro-Tek Preservation Vaults were opened at the Kodak Hollywood Center in 1994. "We have achieved a lot during these past seven years," Utley says. "In addition to providing a valuable service, we have under-

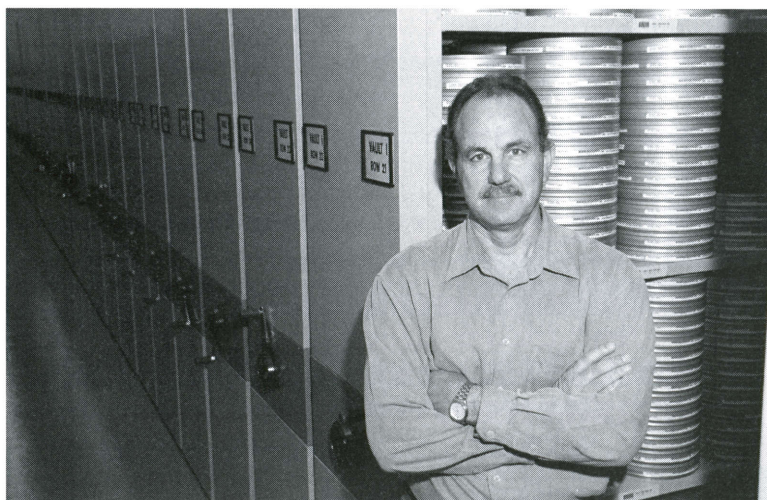
taken many initiatives to help educate our customers about the importance of establishing proper techniques for ensuring the efficacy of the films they own. We have also learned a lot about how to improve products and techniques for extending the life of film. Kodak is apply-

strong steel superstructure makes the Pro-Tek building one of the safest media storage facilities in Los Angeles in the event of a catastrophic earthquake," Utley notes.

Each vault has the equivalent of a two-hour fire shell built around it to

Top: The new Pro-Tek Media Preservation Center, located in Burbank, houses film and video preservation vaults as well as an inspection center.

Bottom: Rick Utley, vice president of Pro-Tek Preservation Services for Cinesite, Inc., in one of the three vaults designed to hold a total of 600,000 film and video elements in medium-term storage.



ing this knowledge to the development of new products."

The new facility has an expanded capacity, along with new safeguards designed to protect films against natural and man-made disasters. "An incredibly

protect the contents, in addition to fire-repression redundancy. The vaults have a pre-action, dry pipe sprinkler system along with a FM 200 gas system that is tied to a sophisticated central sensing device that samples air for airborne parti-

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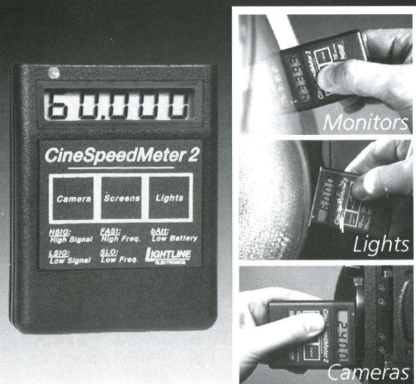
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Above: The Pro-Tek vaults satisfy stringent ANSI standards that are intended to extend the life of motion picture film as long as 500 years. Elements in the vaults are identified with bar codes and appropriate labels, and computer tracking is used to monitor all film entering and leaving the premises. Left: PRO-TEK technician Paul Narvaez examines a client's invaluable film asset. Pro-Tek's inspection center provides customers with detailed inspection reports on their film elements.

cles. Should the system detect smoke, the FM 200 gas will be released, prohibiting flames from generating within the vault space. The pre-action sprinkler system will activate only as a very last resort. The ceilings of the three vaults are waterproof.

Stringent security precautions have also been taken to protect the content in the vaults from unauthorized intruders. The building itself has been secured with multiple security cameras in strategic locations, along with cardkey employee access to the vault area.

Currently, a large majority of material in the Pro-Tek vaults comes from several studios, television networks, independent filmmakers and private collections.

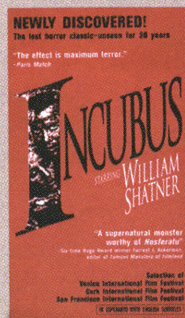
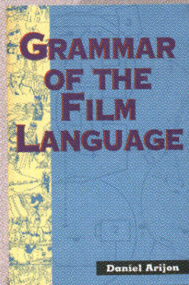
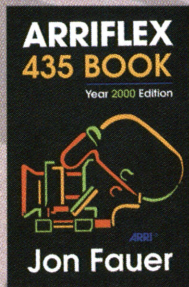
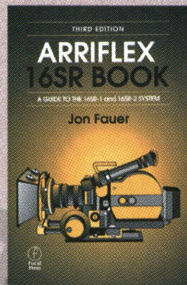
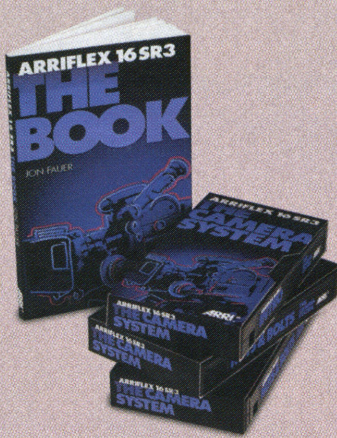
"Our recommendation to properly protect theatrical films is to make polyester base black-and-white silver-halide

separation masters of the original negative," Utey stresses. "There are no dyes to fade, and to date, the polyester is not known to shrink. We suggest to our content holders that they store their separations, original camera negative and intermediate printing master in vaults that are geographically separated. This prevents all elements of a given title from perishing in a man-made or natural catastrophic event. At the very least, regardless of how the original negative has been protected, it should always be separated from the protection element. This should include original sound elements also."

Utey believes it is important to inspect film before it is stored in a vault in order to know the quality level of those elements before storage. Several studios now routinely have Pro-Tek inspect all elements of their new productions before they are put in storage. Both color negatives and intermediate films that have been properly stored will last for hundreds of years.

"We have tried to build into our vaults the systems that we think our clients would want if they had a wish

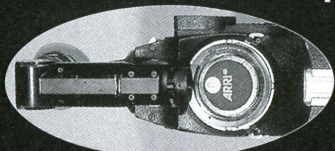
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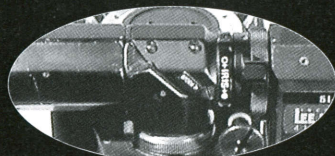
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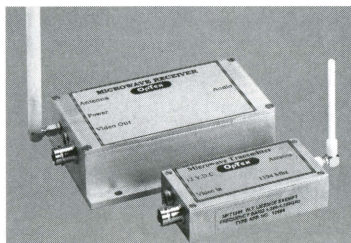
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list, as well as a modern-day environment with services that meet their needs," he concludes.

For additional information about the Pro-Tek Media Preservation Center, visit the Web site at <http://www.cine.com/la/la-presrest-protek.html> or call (323) 468-4452, fax (323) 468-4486.

Hands-on

SetWear specializes in the design, production and distribution of a new line of specialty gear for the entertainment industry's production community. A division of Mechanix Wear, which markets gloves, shoes and accessories to the automotive, safety and tool industries, SetWear will offer a full line of gloves, kneepads, toolbags, belts, hats, shirts and jackets designed with the needs of production personnel in mind.

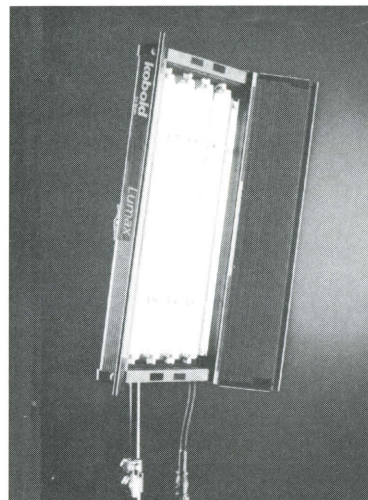


SetWear's line of gloves include the original spandex Easy-Fit; Pro leather gloves; Hi-Heat gloves for hot light changes; chemical resistant Solvent gloves; and basic latex and cotton gloves designed for use around delicate camera components.

For grips, electrics and camera assistants, SetWear also offers ditty bags, an array of belts for support and tools and a line of pouches ranging the Jumbo Camera Assistant pouch to one small enough to hold a Mini Mag-Lite or pager. Pouches are available for large tools and radios as well.

Cable runners will like the new nylon and velcro-strap Plug Snugger, which secures two cables together, thus eliminating sticky taped-together plugs. The Plug Snugger can also be used to hang cords ranging from power feeds and bates cables to smaller household cords and stingers.

To browse and purchase SetWear products, or to find a local retail outlet, visit the company's Web site at www.setwear.com; call (877) SETWEAR (toll-free) or (818) 340-0540; or fax (818) 340-6434.



Bold Lighting

European lighting company Kobold has introduced the Lumax cold light system suitable for location and studio use. The barn-door hinge is designed to be more durable than wire hinges. Adapter clips can be used to mount either 38mm or 26mm diameter fluorescent tubes. The Lumax light banks are available for tubes of 60cm or 120cm in length in banks of four. With the patented T-girder system, two light banks can be easily joined together to create a bank of eight.

The sturdy sheet steel mounting plate is a heavy-duty design and can be pivoted in any direction. The durable plastic lamp housing reduces weight, decreases ceiling load for indoor shoots and simplifies transport. A stepless dimmable electronic ballast from Bron Elektronik AG guarantees a long service life and flicker-free operation. Both daylight and artificial light color-corrected tubes are manufactured especially for Kobold resulting in optimum color quality with no green tinge.

Also from Kobold is the DF 400 PO and DF 1200 PO daylight Fresnel floodlights. The HMI/MSR elements in the units are single-side, socket types for optimum efficiency. The reflector design

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and short focal length lens provide very high light output. The 400-watt lamp has a focusing range of 6°-54°, and the 1200-watt lamp has a range of 6°-44°. The floodlights are designed for one-handed pivoting in any direction with a built-in brake. "PO" means they may also be pole-operated.

The housings of the units are made of high-strength molded and cast aluminum parts to minimize bulk and weight. Available accessories include a rotatable four-leaf barn door with filter clamps, filter frames, safety grid, diffusion filters, 3200°K conversion filters, extension cables, poles, stands and carrying cases. Both conventional and electronic ballasts can be used.

The Daylight DWO 400 is a weatherproof daylight lamp with an electronic ballast unit. The compact DWO 400, comprised of the lamp head



and electronic ballast, provides maximum reliability in extreme environmental conditions, and is splash-resistant.

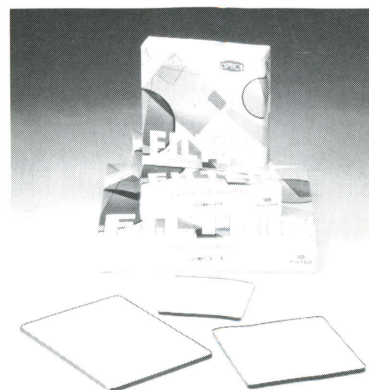
The housing is made of high-strength aluminum and contains a single-side socket-type HMI/MSR element. The igniter is waterproof and allows hot and cold restrikes even in high-humidity environments. The element is arranged axially with respect to the light emission direction, creating a homogeneous and rotationally symmetrical light pattern. A focusing range from 13°-57° can be achieved with the control knob.

The light is equipped with a handle for on-hand operation to pivot in any direction with a built-in brake. For transport, the stand mount can be disassembled without tools, making the carrying case that much smaller. Accessories for the DWO 400 are similar to those available for the DF 400 PO. A Par version of the DWO 400, called the DWP 400 PAR, is also available.

Bron Elektronik AG, +41 61 481 80 80, fax +41 61 481 14 23, e-mail: info@bron.ch, Web site: www.bron-kobold.com.

Optically Speaking

Schneider Optics' LowCon 2000 filters reduce contrast and permit light to bleed into shadow areas while desaturating colors and creating mood in nature scenes without muddying the image. The lighter values are needed to take the edge off today's high-contrast, ultra-sharp lenses. They are available in 4" x 4", 4" x 5.650" and 6.6" x 6.6" sizes in strengths of 1/8, 1/4, 1/2, 1 and 2. The





LowCon 2000 filters are made of optical glass that is precision-ground and polished to the highest standards for plane parallelism. Schneider filters produce identical effects with long and wide lenses and zoom lenses at all focal lengths.

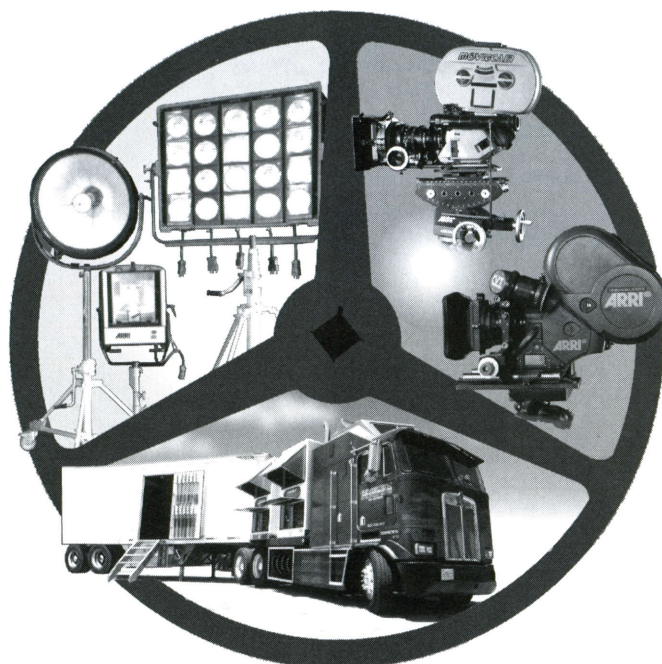
The line of two-element Series 9 Achromat Diopters allow extremely close focusing with zoom or prime lenses without compromising image quality. The Achromat Diopters are specially designed for superior color performance and are ideal for video and 16mm film. They also work well for tabletop and miniatures, and provide edge-to-edge sharpness with excellent color and contrast while maintaining sharp focus throughout the entire zoom range. Due to their design, the diopters create virtually no color shift, thus eliminating the need for color compensation.

The Series 9 Achromatic Diopters feature Schneider's hard anti-reflective (AR) coating, which dramatically reduces light loss and flare. The diopters are also stackable for even greater magnification and are available singly or in sets of three in strengths of +1, +2 and +3. Each diopter is supplied with front and rear lens caps.

Schneider Optics, inc., (631) 761-5000, fax (631) 761-5090, Web site: www.schneideroptics.com.

On the Video Side...

OpTex has added the Canon 33x 11 zoom lens to its stable of Electronic Cinematography-styled lenses. Although designed for standard definition cameras, tests have shown that the lens also offers outstanding results when used on HDTV cameras. Like all lenses in OpTex's EC range, the iris is calibrated in T-stops while focus is calibrated from a nominal 48mm image plane rather than

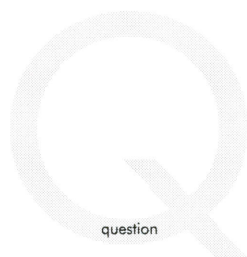


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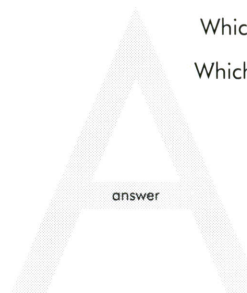
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the front of the lens. Gear rings are fitted to focus, zoom and iris so that conventional film accessories can be used. Both x2 and x1.4 HD range extenders will be available for the lens.

Optex, +44 (0) 20-8441 2199, fax (sales) +44 (0) 20-8449 3646, fax (rentals) +44 (0) 20-8364 9235, e-mail: sales@optex-int.com, Web site: www.optexint.com, or visit Optex's high definition Web site at www.highdef.com.

Convertible Stand

Avenger's A700 Junior Boom Stand quickly converts from a sturdy four-section lightstand to a full-function, telescoping light boom and stand. Its



Universal head can accommodate both Junior 1 1/8"- and 5/8"-sized lighting fixtures. The maximum stand height is 13' 1" with a maximum boom length of 8' 9". It weighs 33 pounds and has a footprint of 46". The rated load capacity depends on the counterweight.

For more information about the Avenger A700, contact Bogen Photo

Corp. in New Jersey at (201) 818-9500, fax (201) 818-9177, e-mail: info@bogen-photo.com, Web site: www.bogen-photo.com, or in California at (818) 566-9754.

The Grand Canyon State

For that next location shoot in Arizona, the Arizona Film Commission (AFC) has a new online innovation designed to facilitate filmmakers' needs. The state's production guide, listing statewide film professionals, support businesses and other useful statewide filming information, is available on the Internet.

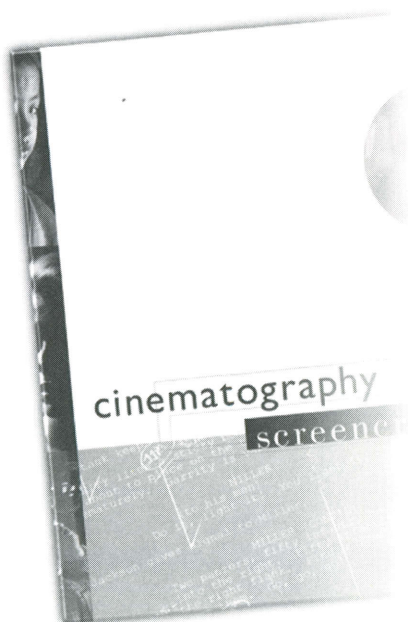
The interactive database takes the printed version a step further by providing search capabilities for every production service category with a single keystroke. Searching for a specific skill or service not only provides a list of companies and individuals offering that specific skill/service, but also lists all of the services those companies and individuals can provide, saving time and effort for

Cinematography Screencraft

by Peter Ettedgui

The 17 directors of photography profiled in this book encompass three generations of filmmaking, representing a wide range of visual styles — from *The African Queen* to *Delicatessen*. Lavishly illustrated with over 500 color pictures, 300 black-and-white photos, and numerous diagrams, this reference features informative accompanying text based on interviews with each cinematographer. This is a perfect book for practicing professionals, students, and movie buffs alike.

Softcover, 9" x 12", 208 pages \$37.00
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the filmmaker.

The online production guide is continuously updated, ensuring that information is current and accurate. Arizona film professionals may also submit or change listing information directly on the AFC Web pages.

Visit the AFC online production guide at www.azcommerce.com/azfilmcommission.htm.

Texas Complex

The Austin Film Society (AFS) has launched the Austin Studios: Soundstages & Media Center, a multi-faceted studio complex for film, television and multimedia. Austin Studios will be created and housed on approximately 20 acres of the former Robert Mueller Municipal Airport, and will be operated as a non-profit venture of the Austin Film Society to complement the AFS's efforts in the areas of community outreach, education and the development of local film and multimedia industries. The studio complex adds an important

element previously missing in Austin's film industry infrastructure.

The site features office space and six airplane hangars that will be used for production space. The complex will eventually include a screening room and long-term office space. Apprenticeships and internships will also be offered for high school and college students.

For more information, call the Austin Film Society at (512) 322-0145, fax (512) 322-0726 or visit their Web site at www.austinfilm.org.

Processing and Post

Miami-based Cineworks Digital Studios Inc.'s 18,000-square foot, full-service postproduction facility integrates the latest in film processing technology, telecine transfer and non-linear editing. The facility's telecine transfer suite contains an ITK "Y" Front-enhanced Cintel Ursa Diamond and Da Vinci 8:8:8 color correction. Cineworks offers an array of lab processes such as push-pull, bleach-bypass and cross-processing.

Avid 9000 and Avid Meridian XL-1000 bays are available for editing purposes.

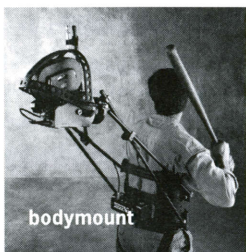
For more information and rate quotes, contact Cineworks Digital Studios at (877) 339-1237 or (305) 754-7501, fax (305) 754-3850, or visit their Web site at www.cineworks.com.

A Steadi Update

The Tiffen Company's Motion Picture and Television Division reached an agreement with Steadicam inventor Garrett Brown to produce, market and sell the Steadicam line of manually held camera support systems. Tiffen's primary goal is to work with Brown to develop new models that will continue to advance the state-of-the-art Steadicam line while supporting the current Steadicam community by producing, distributing and servicing the existing line of products in use throughout the world. New models are being developed. The Steadicam Ultra recently received the TV Technology STAR (Superior Technology Award Recipient)

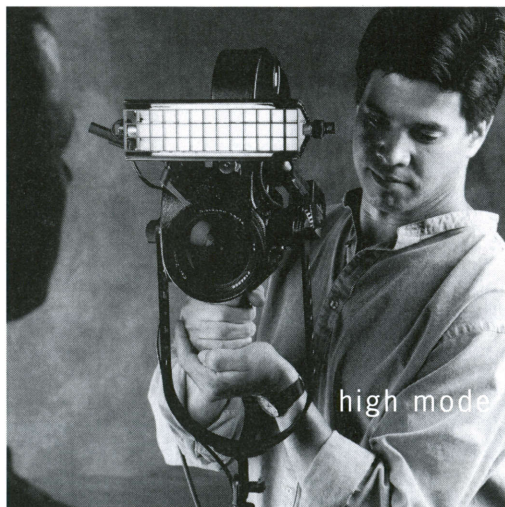
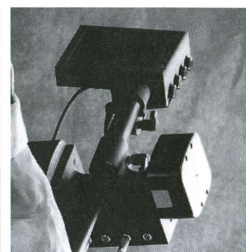


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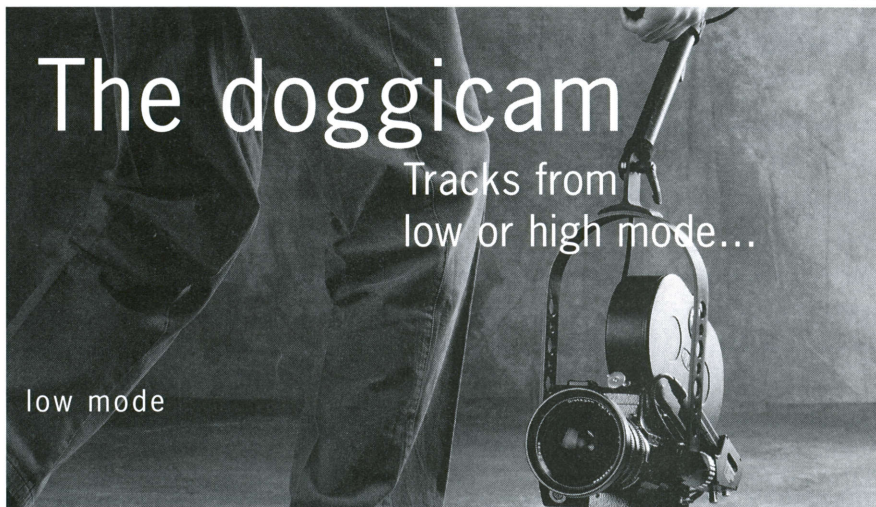


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Award at IBC 2000 in Amsterdam.

For more information about this co-venture, contact Tiffen at (631) 273-2500, fax (631) 273-2557, e-mail: tech-support@tiffen.com, Web site: www.tiffen.com.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

The SMPTE 2001 Conference July 9-12 in Sydney, Australia, has announced a call for papers on various important topics that will help shape the conference to attendees' needs. The conference will be associated with and exhibition of equipment relating to video, audio, film and data industries. The list of paper topics includes "Sports TV," "Broadcast Standards," "Film's Role in the Digital World" and "What's New with Digital Cinema," among others. The deadline for submitting papers is January 31, 2001.

To see a complete list of topics, discuss paper ideas, recommend a topic for inclusion or to submit a paper, contact: SMPTE 2001 Conference Organizer, Expertise Events, P.O. Box 295, Brookvale NSW 2100, +61 2 9939 4445, fax +61 2 9939 4251, e-mail: smp2001@expertiseevents.com.au, Web site: www.smp2e.com.au.

Tube Protection

Location Lighting of Pennsylvania has designed the new K- Case, an alternative to cumbersome and inefficient storage of Kino Flo fluorescent tubes. Cinematographer Brad Shapiro and Key Grip Jim Devers, owners of the grip and lighting rental house Location Lighting, produced a case that holds 25 Kino Flo tubes and loads from the top like a tripod tube. The removable lid allows the user to see the color-coded end of each tube for an instant inventory of contents. The



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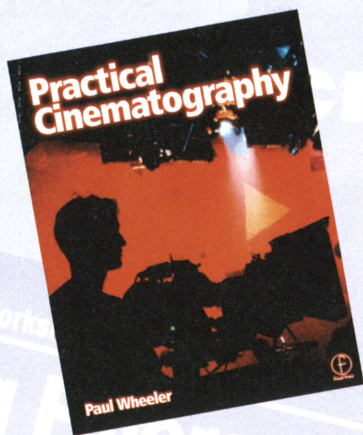
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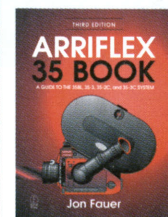
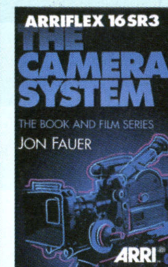
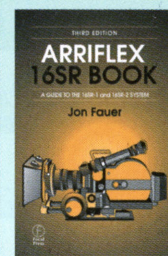
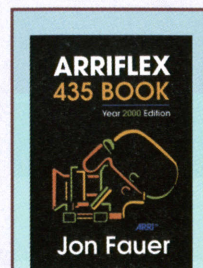
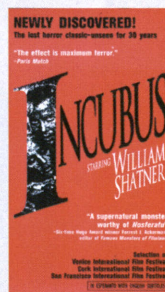
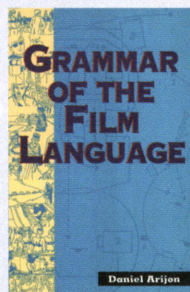
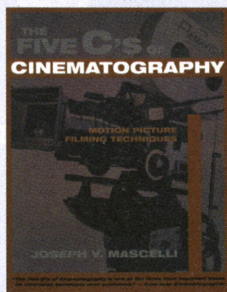
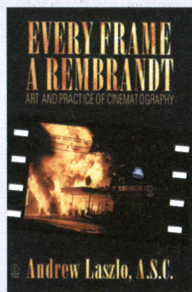
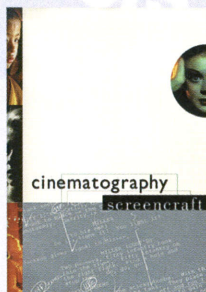
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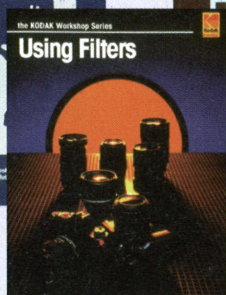
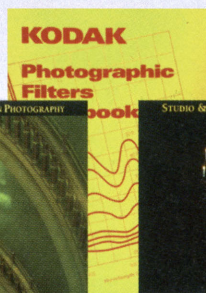
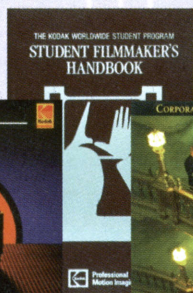
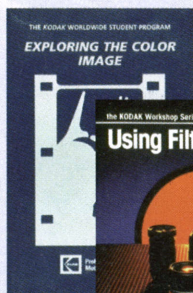
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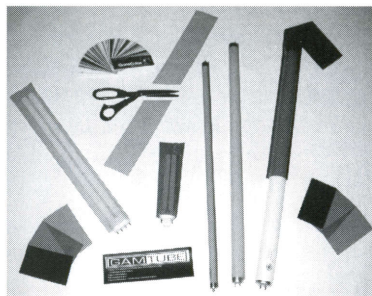
Available in 2' and 4' sizes, the sturdy cases are rugged and long-lasting. The cases are also available through many Kino Flo dealers.

For additional information and orders, visit the Web site at www.locationlighting.com, or call (215) 233-1909, e-mail: mail@locationlighting.com.

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Submissions for "New Products & Services" should be sent to the attention of Associate Editor Douglas Bankston at 1782 N. Orange Dr., Hollywood, California, 90028. Please include any images and full contact information with submission. Images may be sent as color slides, color or black-and-white prints, or digital files (Mac Photoshop TIFF format, 300dpi, on Zip or Jaz drives). Information may also be e-mailed to doug@theasc.com with one image attached per e-mail (at a minimum resolution of 300dpi). Materials will not be returned without a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Points East

A Venerable Format Lives — and Thrives

by Eric Rudolph

We may be deep in the age of palm-sized, digital-video wonder cameras, but traditionalists may still want to consider a convenient alternative. This option is an inexpensive motion-picture film format used in ultra-lightweight cameras. The cameras are widely available on the used market and at garage sales for very low prices. Better still, this format allows the use of Kodak's unique Kodachrome film, the super-fine-grain reversal stock long-beloved by still photographers for its rich rendition of color and proven resistance to fading. Best of all, one can probably get this film processed at a local Wal-Mart.

Of course, we're talking about Super 8. It might seem reasonable to assume that this narrow-gauge film format has been pronounced dead, or is at least on serious life support. But to paraphrase Mark Twain, reports of Super 8's death have been greatly exaggerated. In fact, the format has legions of fans all over the world, including home-movie makers, serious artists and prominent feature-film directors.

Kodak introduced Super 8 with much ballyhoo on April 15, 1965. Its main selling points were easy, snap-in cartridge loading and improved image quality, thanks to a significantly increased image area (mainly the result of a decrease in the sprocket size). For a time in the Seventies, almost any type of gear needed to make double-system Super 8 sound films, such as professional-style flatbed editing tables and sound-transfer equipment, was available. During that same decade, prior to the arrival of practical, portable video cameras, serious attempts were also



made to adapt Super 8 for use by television news crews; at the time, most TV news footage was shot with single-system 16mm sound cameras.

Though Super 8 was invented nearly 36 years ago, Kodak has hardly abandoned the format. The company currently offers five Super 8 stocks, according to Steve Garfinkel, a long-time New York account executive with Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging Division and an ardent supporter of Super 8. These stocks include Kodachrome 40, Tri-X and Plus-X (black-and-white), as well as Ektachrome 125 color reversal (the same as Kodak's professional 7240). Less widely available is the Super 8 version of Kodak's EXR 200 ASA film. "Interest in Super 8 has surged in the last five years," Garfinkel says, adding that Kodak's stock offerings for the format are actually more extensive than in the past.

If it seems surprising that a variety of Super 8 stocks are available, get ready for another shock: regular 8mm stock is also still manufactured by Kodak,

in several color and black-and-white versions packaged on 25' spools by Yale Laboratories in Los Angeles. (Many small-gauge enthusiasts insist that regular 8mm is the truer artistic medium, because Super 8's cartridge loads make the use of in-camera multiple exposures difficult, if not impossible.)

One extinct Super 8 film, introduced in 1973, is much lamented: the magnetically striped sound film made for use in single-system sound Super 8 cameras. At least one ultra-low-budget horror feature, *Bleak Future*, was

Super 8 enthusiast Steve Osborne has a home theater in his basement that includes an Elmo Super 8 projector with stereo sound (foreground, top photo), a 16mm projector and a 10' x 4' Hurley Silver Glow high-gain screen (below).



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completed using this stock, and New York film and punk-rock aficionado Brian Zabawski used it with a Super 8 sound camera to credibly document late 1970s and early 1980s performances by bands such as Blondie, the Clash, the Ramones and the Talking Heads. According to Garfinkel, the sound stocks (Kodachrome 40, Ektachrome 160, and Ektachrome 7242 and 7244 Sound Film) were discontinued because the adhesive that held the magnetic striping presented environmental problems. Until fairly recently, Kodak and others would stripe Super 8 cartridges for sound use, but this is no longer done.

It is simple to obtain Kodak's regular Super 8 stocks; they are widely available via mail order and the Web, as well as at larger camera stores. (B&H Photo, a retailer in New York, lists the four main Super 8 stocks in its catalog. They range from \$10.95 for the black-and-white to \$19.95 for Kodachrome. The company also sells Kodak Super 8 processing mailers at \$5.59 each.)

Wal-Mart, the nation's largest retailer, might be called a major enabler of the Super 8 habit. The company offers processing of Kodachrome Super 8 stock for about \$6 per 50' reel at many of its stores (via the K-14 independent lab and the Swiss Kodachrome lab). Many labs in New York and Los Angeles process the black-and-white and Ektachrome films, and optical printing is also available at more than one company.

Los Angeles-based Super8 Sound has long served as the mainstream film industry's toehold in the world of Super 8. The company offers many of Kodak's professional motion-picture negative stocks cut down to size and loaded into Super 8 cartridges. It also rents and sells what is believed to be the only Super 8 camera currently made in the Western world, the professional-grade French Beaulieu synch-sound model 9008, which sells for \$8,000-\$10,000 new. Much cheaper Russian-made Super 8 cameras are also widely available.

A number of Super 8 enthusiasts are not filmmakers at all, however; they are film fans who like showing feature films on *film* in their own home theaters,

some of which are quite elaborate. (Full versions of recent and classic mainstream features are available on Super 8; many are in the anamorphic widescreen format, and most feature stereo soundtracks. Two English companies, Derann Film Service and Classic Home Cinema, offer a selection of such films.)

One such enthusiast is Steve Osborne of Kettering, Ohio. Osborne publishes *The Reel Image* magazine, which is aimed at collectors of 8mm, Super 8 and 16mm films. He also has a 12' x 30' Super 8 and 16mm private cinema in his basement with a 10'-wide, Hurley Silver Glow high-gain screen. He says that with a high-quality Super 8 print, the onscreen image is "like 35mm — you can't see a speck of grain and the colors are beautiful." Osborne uses a high-end Elmo Super 8 stereo-sound projector with a 24-volt, 250-watt lamp and a 16mm anamorphic projection lens for his widescreen Super 8 presentations.

In addition, a number of low-key Super 8 salons/festivals (many of which share the evocative name Flicker) are staged around the country, in places such as Athens, Georgia; Austin, Texas; and Los Angeles.

The largest small-gauge film festival, according to Garfinkel, is the United States Super 8mm Film/Video Festival, which has been held at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, for the past 12 years. (The entry deadline for the 2001 festival is January 19, and the festival will run from February 16-18. The festival's e-mail address is NJMAC@aol.com.) Al Nigrin, a professor of cinema studies at Rutgers and coordinator of the festival, says that the event has attracted as many as 200 entries per year; past winners include Jem Cohen, the director of several high-profile music videos and the recent feature documentary *Benjamin Smoke*, which has a Super 8 segment. Nigrin, a passionate Super 8 filmmaker for the past 20 years, says he runs the festival because he feels "it is important to be there for the little guy." ■

Eric Rudolph can be contacted via e-mail at erudolph2@nyc.rr.com.

Books in Review

by Ray Zone

**Personal Visions:
Conversations With
Contemporary
Film Directors**

by Mario Falsetto

Silman-James Press

529 pps., paperbound, \$19.95

ISBN1-879505-51-7

The auteur theory is alive and well in this collection of interviews with 27 directors working in the realm of independent cinema. "These directors," writes Mario Falsetto, "represent a new generation of filmmakers engaged in groundbreaking work, often outside the major Hollywood studios.... One of the most distinctive features of contemporary American cinema, and perhaps the film story of the last 20 years, is the extraordinary explosion of independent cinema."

The list of interviewees includes Michael Almereyda, Anna Campion, Terence Davies, Tom DiCillo, Atom Egoyan, Keith Gordon, Nicholas Hytner, Neil Jordan, Richard Linklater, Alison Maclean, John McNaughton, Michael Radford, Philip Ridley, Benjamin Ross, Alan Rudolph, Michael Tolkin and Lynne Stopkewich. Although some of these directors have major-studio features among their credits, Falsetto maintains that they all generally fall under the umbrella of "independent film."

However, the filmmakers themselves appear to have mixed feelings about that term. Rudolph, whose credits include *Welcome to L.A.* and *The Moderns*, notes, "There is no such thing [as independent]. Everybody is dependent on money; it's just a label now." McNaughton, the director of *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* and *Wild Things*, points out that "in many ways, I would rather work for a studio than an

independent. [Studios are] going to be there next year... to distribute your picture."

One common theme that emerges through these interviews is the utterly exhausting and consuming nature of filmmaking. As Falsetto points out, "In the production of a film, no individual is as close to every aspect of the creative process as the director. Who is more qualified to examine the intricacies of creation than the individual most intimately involved in all aspects of production?"

"I had no idea how exhausting it is to be a director," says Tolkin, director of *The Rapture* and *The New Age*. What qualities are necessary to be a director? "An obsessive desire," says Stopkewich, "and an ability to understand what your vision is and to communicate it in a collaborative spirit." For DiCillo, whose credits include *Living in Oblivion*, *Box of Moonlight* and *The Real Blonde*, the most pleasurable aspect of film directing is "the creative process — and that is one of the shortest things in the entire process." Beyond that, he finds the most exhilarating thing to be "taking the film into a theater and sitting with an audience, seeing people react to what you've done."

Nominated for a Best Director Oscar for *The Sweet Hereafter* in 1998, Egoyan states, "I need to have final cut. That's how I make my films." This is the best expression of what independent filmmaking is all about. For Egoyan, serving on a jury at Cannes made him realize that "this was the tradition that I really was a part of, and not some Hollywood dream. Seeing *Breaking the Waves*, *Secrets and Lies*, *Crash* and *Fargo* shook me into understanding what I was doing."

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Shakespeare in the Movies: From the Silent Era to

Shakespeare in Love

by Douglas Brode

Oxford University Press

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ISBN 0-19-513958-5

Orson Welles always claimed that Shakespeare would have made a great movie writer, and the director created several films to illustrate his position, including *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Chimes at Midnight*. But as Douglas Brode points out in this book, "Shakespearean cinema is the only subgenre of narrative film that remains the center of an ongoing debate — not only among skeptical literary traditionalists, but even those cinéastes who make the movies — as to whether it has a right to exist."

Why would this be the case? After all, the "Bard's own audiences were interested in a bloody good time," writes Brode. "His plays, filled with murders, sexual transgressions, ghosts and witches have more in common with the latest blockbusters than anything on the art-house circuit."

Shakespeare also helped launch cinema as an entertainment a hundred years ago. Thomas Edison and George Méliès both adapted the Bard's works to the screen in the early years of the 20th century, and Shakespeare's plays were essential in establishing the fledgling Vitagraph company, which adapted *Romeo and Juliet* (starring Paul Panzer and Florence Lawrence) in 1908.

In answer to the critics, Brode argues for the suitability of Shakespeare for cinema. "Shakespeare and his contemporaries reached into what would eventually be called cinematic territory," he says. "A film script is composed of some 50 to 75 brief scenes, with rapidly changing locations, and that's how the Bard constructed his works." Brode further contends that Shakespeare's plays were really screen-plays "written, ironically, three centuries before the birth of cinema."

Welles knew this, and he never filmed any plays other than Shake-

speare's. "Old Will would have loved the movies!" Welles exclaimed, and Brode explains why: "His theater... was an active rather than passive experience, [with] each viewer urged to collaborate in the creative process. The work finally comes to life in the audience's mind, which is precisely how the greatest filmmakers work."

In this book, each of Shakespeare's theatrical works is addressed in individual chapters, presented in the order in which the plays were written. The film adaptations are also presented chronologically within the corresponding chapter, along with a discussion of Shakespeare's life at the time he wrote the particular work. Through this method of organization, the author sheds light on the Bard's life and world and how they factored into each play, as well as how the plays were adapted to the changing tastes of modern times.

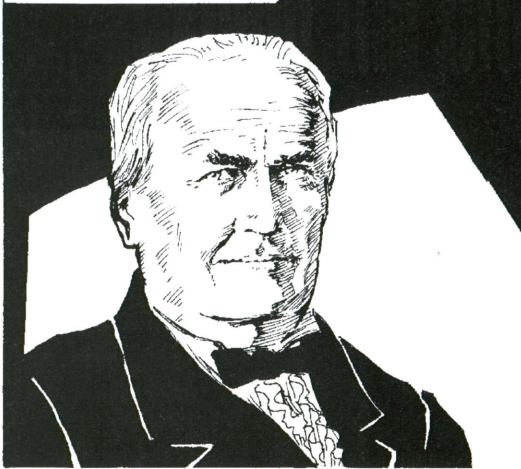
Brode also presents some interesting stories about landmark adaptations. Laurence Olivier's 1955 screen version of *Richard III* was broadcast nationwide on television and opened in limited theatrical release the same day. "By paying a then-enormous \$500,000, NBC and sponsor General Motors underwrote most production costs," Brode writes. "They also created a possible entry in the Guinness Book of World Records: in a single afternoon, more people saw this production than had attended performances in the three and a half centuries since *Richard III* was written. At that moment, the phrase 'global village' became a reality."

Brode's book concludes with a chapter titled "As We Go to Press," in which he cites the seven Academy Awards for *Shakespeare in Love* and takes note of other recent variations on the Bard's work, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *10 Things I Hate About You*. "Shakespeare," notes Brode, "is alive and well and living in Hollywood." ■

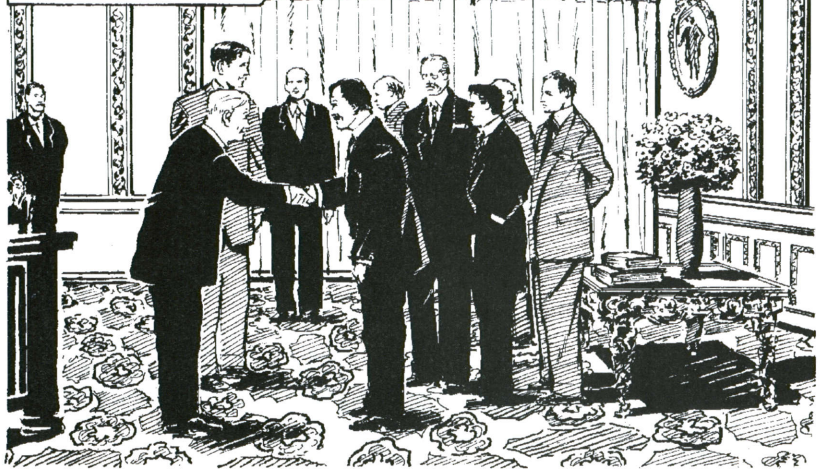
THE TRUST

by Ray Zone & Chuck Roblin

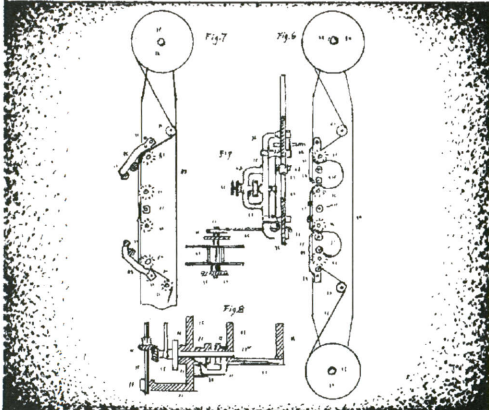
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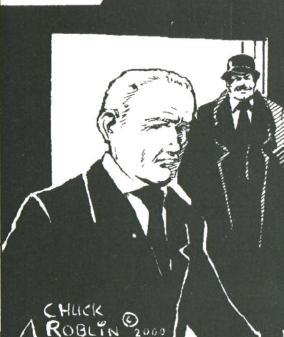
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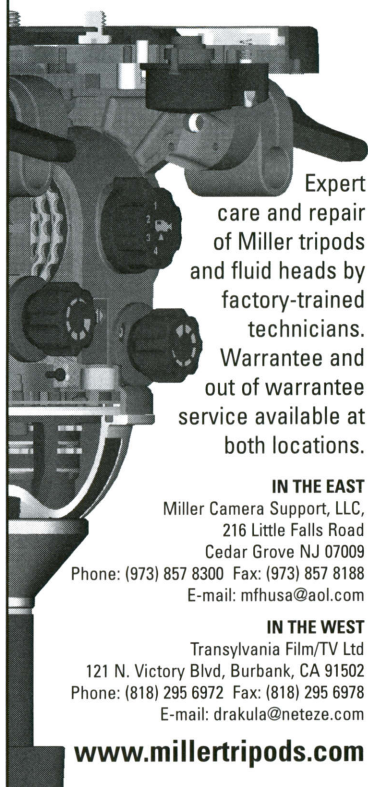
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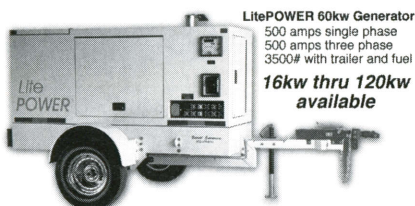
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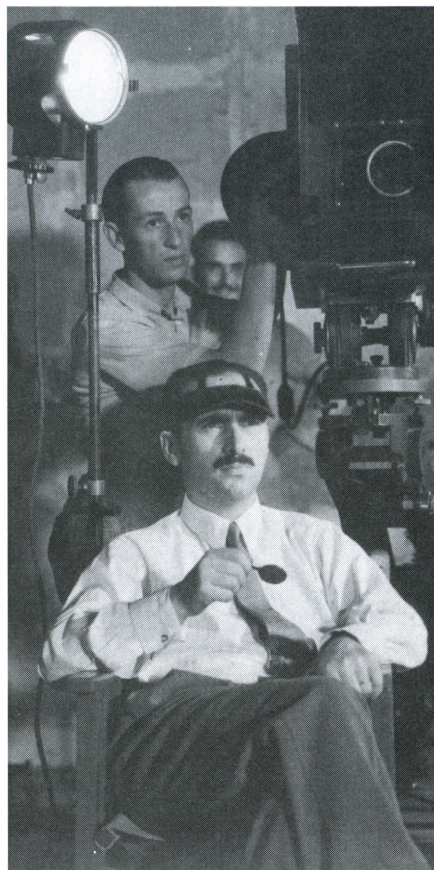
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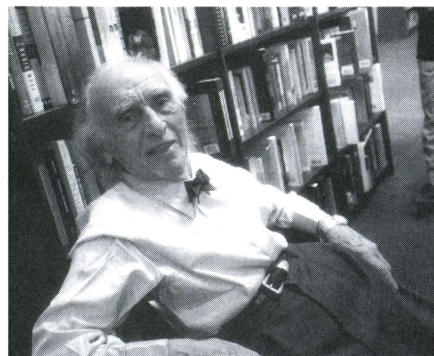
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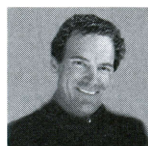
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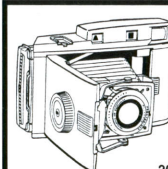
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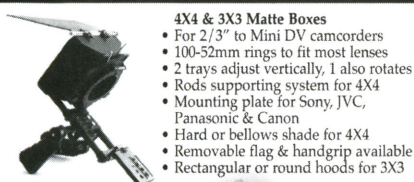
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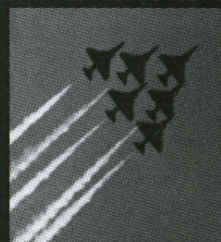


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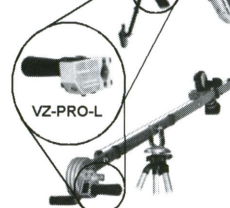
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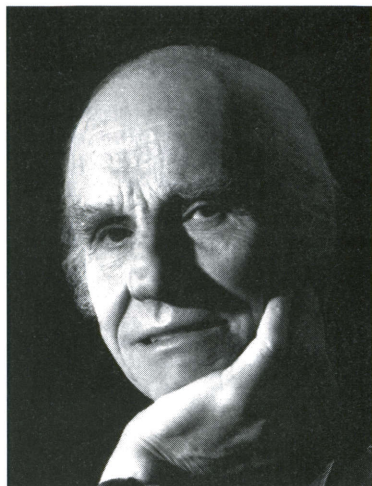
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From the Clubhouse



An International Achievement

Billy Williams, BSC will receive the ASC International Achievement Award at the 15th Annual ASC Awards, to be held on February 18 at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. The award is presented periodically to a cinematographer outside the United States who has made a significant and enduring impression on the art of filmmaking.

During his 40-year career, Williams has compiled nearly 40 credits as a cinematographer. He earned Academy Award nominations for *Women in Love* in 1969 and *On Golden Pond* in 1981, and he took home the Oscar for *Gandhi* in 1982.

Williams, who was president of the British Society of Cinematographers from 1975-77, has earned BAFTA nominations for *Gandhi*, *The Magus*, *Sunday Bloody Sunday* and *Women in Love*. Some of his other films include *The Wind and the Lion*, *Voyage of the Damned*, *Eagle's Wing*, *The Manhattan Project*, *Dreamchild* and *Stella*. His most recent film was *Driftwood*, released in 1996.

"Billy Williams has earned this recognition from his peers in our organization for artful and original work that has stood the test of time," says ASC president Victor J. Kemper. "Billy is also

a great role model and teacher who has influenced filmmakers around the world."

New ASC Members

The ASC has added Alex Nepomniaschy and Philippe Rousselot, AFC to its active membership.

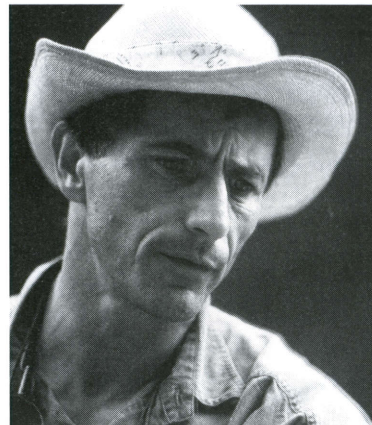
Born in Moscow, **Alex Nepomniaschy** immigrated to the United States in 1974 to escape religious persecution. Soon afterward, he attended film school at New York University to learn the American ways of filmmaking. After graduation, he filmed the feature-length documentary *Beirut – The Last Home Movie*, which won the 1981 Sundance Film Festival grand prize for cinematography. He followed that success by earning a master's degree from the American Film Institute.



Nepomniaschy's career has covered a wide range of projects. His feature credits include *Wanted Dead or Alive*, *The End of Innocence*, *Safe* (Best Cinematography, Boston Society of Film Critics), *Mrs. Winterbourne*, *The Associate*, *The Alarmist*, *Never Been Kissed* and, most recently, *A Time for Dancing*.

His small-screen work includes the *Sable* pilot (ASC Award nomination), *Tales from the Crypt*, the pilots and series for the shows *Golden Years* and *Missing Persons*, and the telefilms *Murderous Visions*, *After the Shock* and *To Live Again*.

French-born **Philippe Rousselot, AFC** became enamored with cinema at the age of 11 when his parents signed him up for a two-week camp



where films were screened each night. His passion took him to Vaugirard film school, and afterward he became a loader and assistant for Nestor Almendros, ASC. Rousselot notched his first feature director of photography credits on *Clair de Terre* (1970) and *Absence Répétées* (1971).

In 1981, he won a César Award for cinematography for *Diva*, which attracted international recognition. Director John Boorman gave Rousselot his first break in the U.S. market on the film *The Emerald Forest*. Boorman has since collaborated with the cameraman on two other films, *Hope and Glory*, for which Rousselot earned an Academy Award nomination, and *The Tailor of Panama*.

Rousselot's extensive credits include *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Henry and June* (Academy Award nomination), *The Bear*, *Merci la Vie*, *Flesh & Bone*, *Interview with the Vampire* (see AC Jan. '95), *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, *Instinct*, *Random Hearts* and *Remember the Titans*. He won an Academy Award for *A River Runs Through It* in 1992. He also has won two other César Awards, one BAFTA and one BSC Award and has received three ASC Award nominations.

Rousselot moved to the United States in 1997 and lives in New York. He has also shot and directed numerous commercials, and he directed the feature *The Serpent's Kiss* in 1996. ■

WRAP SHOT



The exotic Melani (Mamo Clark) and U.S. government agent Mala (Ray Mala) investigate strange happenings on Clipper Island in the 1936 serial *Robinson Crusoe of Clipper Island*.

Republic Pictures Corporation claimed that its 1936 serial *Robinson Crusoe of Clipper Island* was based on Daniel Defoe's classic adventure story. But while the 14-episode chapterplay is set in the South Seas, Clipper Island itself is anything but deserted. The tropical island paradise, taboo to the local natives, is a hotbed of international intrigue that conceals a large laboratory filled with spies underneath its periodically erupting volcano.

This fast-paced tropical adventure opens with a 32-minute chapter titled "The Mysterious Island." Each of the other chapters runs 17 minutes. The action begins with the maiden flight of the dirigible San Francisco of Pacific Dirigible Airlines (PDA) to Australia via Clipper Island in the South Pacific, where it must stop to refuel. As the dirigible takes flight, fire breaks out on Clipper Island. The airship proceeds but soon goes down in flames. Just as U.S. government agent Mala (Ray Mala) arrives at the PDA offices to investigate, the last remaining survivor of the Clipper Island disaster is assassinated by a poisoned dart. Mala proceeds to Clipper Island, and en route he encounters the exotic Melani (Mamo Clark), Komatoan

Princess of the native islands, along with Buck the Famous Hero Movie Dog and Rex the Wonder Horse.

Ray Mala brought an abundance of physical agility to his leading role. The actor was of Eskimo lineage and began his film career in 1933 in the appropriately titled film *Eskimo*. After two additional "exotic" roles in *Last of the Pagans* (1935) and *The Jungle Princess* (1936), Mala became a leading man with *Robinson Crusoe of Clipper Island*. He enjoyed a long career playing exotic types in feature films and on television until he died at the relatively young age of 46 in 1952. He played a Native American in *Wild Bill Hickok* (1938), a young Mexican bridegroom in *Hold Back the Dawn* (1941), a Polynesian native in *Mutiny on the Blackhawk* (1939), and characters of Eskimo descent in *Call of the Yukon* (1938) and *Girl From Alaska* (1942).

After debuting as Christian's wife, Maimiti, in *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935), Clark went straight into a leading role as Princess Melani. Her exotic appeal also served her well in *Hurricane* (1937) and *One Million B.C.* (1940).

As chapter one of this thrilling tale closes, our hero Mala is knocked unconscious aboard a flaming seacraft,

and Buck the Famous Movie Dog tries to rouse him. Rex the Wonder Horse has jumped into the briny deep, and the villains have escaped. Meanwhile, a flaming mast begins to topple over toward Mala and Buck.... (Rent the videotape to find out what happens next.)

Robinson Crusoe of Clipper Island was produced by Nat Levine shortly after he began his tenure with Republic Pictures. Levine had founded Mascot Pictures in 1927, and for eight years he'd made serials starring Tom Mix, Gene Autry, John Wayne and Rin-Tin-Tin a staple of that company. By the time Levine joined with Herbert J. Yates at Republic Pictures in 1935, he had great experience in serial production, which was instrumental in establishing Republic as "The Thrill Factory."

The fifth serial produced by Levine at Republic Pictures, *Robinson Crusoe of Clipper Island* featured capable photography by William Noble, ASC and Edgar Lyons. Ellis Thackery, ASC created process cinematography that integrated mammoth dirigibles and flaming island backdrops with foreground action. Additional special-effects footage shot by Thackery featured detailed miniatures of dirigibles and sea craft built by Howard and Theodore Lydecker. The work of the Lydecker brothers was an important factor in the success of the Republic chapterplays. Howard Lydecker served as head of the company's special-effects department from 1937 through production of its 69th and final chapterplay, *King of the Carnival*, in 1955.

Republic ushered the serials into a new golden age in the 1930s and 1940s. The special-effects and stunt work of The Thrill Factory generated a lot of excitement and inspired filmmakers such as George Lucas and Steven Spielberg. In 1966, *Robinson Crusoe of Clipper Island* was cut down from its original running time of 256 minutes to a 100-minute version for TV.

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